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October

2006

DIRTBIKE

RIDER





COMMENT WIN! WIN! WIN!

LET'S NOT beat around the bush – supercross in the UK has for the last few years been a complete farce. We've been treated to crap tracks, last-minute cancellations and rival series going head-to-head with little or no regard for the overall good of the sport.

The whole point of supercross is that it's glitzy, glamorous and offers the kind of facilities (protection from the elements, clean toilets etc) that help bridge the yawning chasm between the informed (that's us lot) and the uninformed (that's everyone else). Done right it's a vital bit of bait to lure in people from outside the sport – they have a great evening's entertainment, tell their friends and, who knows, next time they see an advert for a motocross meeting they might even go along for a day out? Sadly, it hardly ever seems to be done right.

The good news this year is that Future West are returning to Sheffield Arena and that Events 22 are all-systems-go for their Belfast Odyssey event. Both are great venues, both organisations are experienced enough to do the job right and the fans – many, hopefully, from outside the sport – will go home buzzing after a cracking evening out. But it's not enough...

It's not exactly a secret that the various SX promoters in this country don't see eye-to-eye which is where the ACU – the main governing body of the sport in this country – should step in. What's called for is the ACU to actually govern and get FW's John Hellam and E22's Matt Bates together, thrash out an agreement, add a couple more dates at established SX venues (Birmingham's NEC springs to mind plus, say, London's Docklands) and there you have it – a four-round ACU British SX Championship run at quality venues by people who know what they're doing.

The series will have serious prestige which will draw in the manufacturers and importers, they in turn will bring in the big teams and top riders and we'll have the foundations on which to build an arse-kicking SX series all of our very own. Just think – a single professional series that would polarize the sport with everyone working towards a common goal. Admittedly, none of the venues are huge but sell-outs always make for a better atmosphere so combine this with top class racing and the paying public will go home happy. And, just as importantly, be willing to come back.

Obviously, all of the above is very much an ideal scenario – there have been a lot of bridges burned over the last few years and there would need to be hefty portions of humble pie eaten all round for it to happen.

So – ideal scenario aside – what exactly have we got to look forward to? Well, apart from the Sheffield and Belfast SXs there's the exciting news that the ACU have inked a three-year deal with The Norfolk Arena in King's Lynn to host the British Outdoor SX Championship. Now I'm sorry to sound negative but what the hell are they thinking of? An outdoor – yes, OUTDOOR! – supercross series in December – yes, DECEMBER! – in Norfolk – yes, NORFOLK!

It's hard enough trying to run big MX events in summer in this country without the ever-present threat of crappy weather coming along to cause havoc. So why would anyone want to put their name to a SX series being held outdoors in December in a relatively far-flung area of Britain that always seems to bear the brunt of the worst weather around at that time of year?

Now don't get me wrong – we'll provide pre-event publicity, be there to cover the races and genuinely keep our fingers crossed that the crowds come, the rain (and even snow) stays away and that the series is a rip-roaring success. At times I'm guilty of optimism bordering on stupidity but sadly I reckon the most realistic outcome is a series of mud races watched by a dwindling crowd of die-hard fans exposed to the full force of the British elements – and that's just not supercross...

Okay, time to move swiftly on to something much more positive! In just over a week's time Matterley Basin will be throbbing to the roar of the world's best MX riders racing in front of – hopefully – the biggest crowd of the year at the MX des Nations. The same weekend in Latvia our top crews will slug it out in the Sidecarcross des Nations and then, a week later, our best trials riders will go head-to-head with the rest of the world in the Trial des Nations in France.

So good luck to all the British and Irish teams taking part – we're proud of you all and behind you all the way!

MX des Nations tickets up for grabs

WE'VE (THAT'S US) teamed up with Bike-It Promotions (that's them) to offer lucky readers (that's you) 10 pairs of tickets for the Motocross des Nations at Matterley Basin.

To win two tickets all of your very own for the event on September 23/24 just answer the following simple question.

Which DBR columnist is a member of the British MXdN team?

- Is it: A) Billy MacKenzie B) Stephen Sword
C) Stephen Mills D) Jonty Edmunds



Don't miss Billy Mac tear up the track at Matterley Basin

© Suttly

DES DOUBLE!

Brit teams announced for MXdN and TdN

IN JUST over a week's time Britain's top MX riders take on the best in the world at the Motocross des Nations at Matterley Basin, near Winchester, over the weekend of September 23/24.

And just one week later our leading trials riders will be in action in Breal-sous-Montfort in France in the Trial des Nations.

The biggest single event on the planet's motocross calendar, this year's MXdN is the first time the race has visited these shores since the mudfest that was Foxhill in '98.

After lengthy deliberations team manager Rob Herring – a member of Team GB the last time we won the event back in '94 – has gone for youthful enthusiasm with Tommy Searle on a 250F backed up by Carl Nunn and DBR columnist Billy MacKenzie on 450Fs.

"I think our chances are good," reckons Billy Mac. "It's definitely one of the strongest teams we've entered in recent years. We're all fired up and everyone's hungry to do well – all the right ingredients to put in a good result."

"We want to give it our all. If going into the last race there's the choice between settling for a safe fifth or going all-out for a podium then we're going for the podium."

Stephen Sword – who was in contention for a

place on the squad before sustaining a season-ending injury – gives the team the thumbs up!

"Everyone who's in the team deserves their slot," reckons Swordy. "I think we've got a good team. Tommy will ride well in the MX2 and Carl and Billy both can ride big bikes – it's quite a young team and I think they can get in the top five."

While, realistically, a podium would be a great result for the British MXdN team, a top-three finish is the very least we expect from Dougie Lampkin, Graham Jarvis, Shaun Morris and James Dabill – our four-man team for the TdN.

"If I'm honest we have got little chance of winning as on paper the Spanish are by far the strongest team," admits Dougie. "That said, it's all about how we perform on the day and Spain will know that we have stolen it off them before."

"The good news for the future is that we have got two young riders in the form of James Dabill and Shaun Morris who will have the opportunity to ride alongside me and Graham Jarvis before they take over the mantle in years to come."

"The spirit in the British team is always strong and is definitely our strength when it gets tough out on the course."

So good luck to both our male teams and, while we're at it, good luck to the British women's TdN team – Donna Fox, Maria Conway and Becky Cook – and the Irish MXdN team of Gordon Crockard, Phillip McCullough and Martin Barr.

DIRTBIKE RIDER

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McGrath on his way to victory at Sheffield in 2003



© Suttly

SUPERMAC RETURNS!

McGrath headlines 10th birthday party for Sheffield SX

FUTURE WEST celebrate the 10th anniversary of International and British Supercross Championship racing at the Sheffield Hallam FM Arena with a big birthday blow-out on October 28.

Back in 1997 when Future West first staged the Sheffield SX they pulled off an incredible coup by attracting supercross legend Jeremy McGrath across the Atlantic to headline the event on his Yamaha debut.

So it's very fitting that for the 10th birthday celebrations none other than Supermac himself will return to these shores for what's being billed as the final pro race of his long and illustrious career.

McGrath will be joined in Sheffield by fiery Frenchman David Vuillemin who made his name in GPs before heading Stateside where he's enjoyed a successful career racing the AMA SX and MX series.

Between them both the two SX superstars are expected to put on a thrilling race that could even

rival the '97 Main Event when McGrath went up against Damon 'the Beast from the East' Bradshaw and Larry 'Big Bird' Ward and lost out to Ward on the final lap.

As DBR went to press we also received confirmation that controversial US star Mike Alessi has agreed to ride.

Another international entry already confirmed is that of Canadian Kawasaki factory rider and defending British Open SX champ Colton Facciotti while top Brits signed up so far include DBR columnist Gordon Crockard and multi-time British SX champ Neil Prince.

The Sheffield track will be built by Rich Winkler and his Dirt Wurx team who are responsible for construction of the AMA SX circuits, ensuring the most technical and spectacular course ever built at the arena.

And on top of the star Pro class line-up and regular programme of youth classes, Future West are also planning a Supercross Masters duel between past and present stars of British SX.

Tickets are on sale through the Hallam FM Arena box office so book now by calling **0114 256 5656**.

WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN!

Meet McGrath at Sheffield SX

TO MARK their 10th birthday celebrations, we've joined forces with Future West to offer two lucky DBR readers the chance of a lifetime with a very special Sheffield SX VIP package.

Up for grabs are two pairs of all-day, full-access passes to the Sheffield Hallam FM Arena, two rooms in the riders' hotel plus a free event programme. Oh, and the winners will also get to meet Jeremy McGrath and have their pictures taken with him. Even better, the piccies will then find their way into the December issue of DBR!

To be in with a chance of winning, all we want to know is the answer to this simple question...

Which of the following is a genuine nickname for Jeremy McGrath?

- Is it: **A) Supermac** **B) Billy Mac**
C) Big Mac **D) Apple Mac**

Once you've got the answer write it down on the back of a postcard or sealed envelope and send it – along with your name, address and a daytime telephone number – to 'Sheffield SX', DBR, 12 Victoria Street, Morecambe, Lancs LA4 4AG.

Alternatively, hook up to www.dirtbikerider.com and go to the competitions section where you can enter online. Entries close at 12pm on October 12 when two lucky winners will be chosen at random.

SEARLE POWER!

Tommy Gun to make KTM debut at Belfast Supercross

BRITISH TEEN sensation Tommy Searle will make his debut aboard a factory KTM at this year's Belfast Supercross in the city's Odyssey Arena.

Scheduled for November 24/25, organisers Events 22 are aiming to attract a mix of US and European riders but with nothing 100 per cent confirmed no other names have been released yet apart from GP winners Billy MacKenzie and Carl Nunn who are definite entries.

Classes will run along AMA lines with Supercross (MX1) and Supercross Lights (MX2) categories. There will also be a freestyle show with Gary Taylor, Chris Brock and a big-name US rider – possibly Travis Pastrana or Ronnie Renner – plus pro-celebrity minibike races featuring British soap stars as well as tattooed former Boyzone singer Shayne Lynch.

On top of all this Events 22 are building on the Supercross 4 Schools programme they've been working on since 2004.

"Last year we invited 500 kids per day to a tutorial on SX and the business that surrounds it," explains Events 22's Matt Bates. "It's a free day and kids get the chance to see the track being built, visit the W5 learning centre where we run footage from the previous event and hold an open Q & A with local stars Gordon Crockard, Adam Lyons, Martin Barr and Phil McCullough.

"They also get to see the track being ridden for the first time, lunch and the chance to win tickets – it's a great way to introduce kids and schools to the sport!"

For tickets call the box office on **028 9073 9074** and for further information check out the website at www.belfastsupercross.com

OUTSIDE JOB!

ACU seals deal for outdoor British SX series

THE ACU have struck a three-year deal with The Norfolk Arena in King's Lynn to launch an outdoor national SX championship series.

Three rounds are planned for '06 for pro riders and there will also be two separate two-day youth championship rounds. The pros get things rolling with rounds on November 18, December 2 and December 16 with the schoolies getting in on the action on November 26/27 and December 9/10.

A series of ACU-run SX Academy days will also be staged at the venue plus a stand-alone Norfolk Arena SX series.

"After all the inconsistency and worry that we have had about the future of supercross in the UK we were determined to find a solid base that we could build on for years to come," says ACU MX committee chairman Roy Humphrey. "The Norfolk Arena is a great all-in-one package, a proper business that's willing to be both promoter and venue, therefore significantly reducing the risk of failure.

"The series has also been designed to help develop a new generation of young British riders that will hopefully be able to burst onto the American scene."

For more info and registration details contact Chaz Mitchel on **01992 571640/07785 588222** or go to www.norfolkarena.co.uk/nasx.htm

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Cover: The legend that is 10-time world champ Stefan Everts (Alex Hodgkinson)
Contents main image: All systems go as the MX2 men blast out the gate at the Grand Prix of Northern Ireland (Suttly)

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NICE PAIR!

Brad Anderson takes his second thumper crown

Words and photo by Toby Fuller

BRAD ANDERSON claims his second consecutive British four-stroke title on the Pioneer Yamaha at Blaxhall Pits to put a big smile on team boss Roy Emberson's boat race!

Brad's nearest challenger Mark Jones – who needs two wins to keep his title challenge alive going into the final round – comes out looking like he means business in the opening race, taking the holeshot and holding the lead to the flag. Jonesy's PAR Homes Honda team-mate Wayne Smith follows him across the line with Anderson third.

But it's a different story in race two as Jones loses his front wheel around the long first turn and takes Smith down with him. Hobbling back to his feet and in obvious pain the Welshman bravely remounts but an eventual seventh place finish is not enough to stop Anderson taking another thumper crown.

This season's U21 championship has been an interesting and open affair with eight riders claiming race wins. But it's EA KTM rider Jim Murro who has the upper hand in the standings and has managed to open up a healthy points advantage over Steven Clarke and Jamie Law.

At Blaxhall it's Team Green's Law who has the advantage in the opener after a race-long duel with Clarke aboard his PAR Honda. In the closing stages Clarke goes down handing second to the MotoVision Suzuki of Jake Nicholls who's been playing catch up after a poor start.

Looking to go one better, Nicholls stamps his authority on race two from the first lap and looks in a class of his own as he wins comfortably. Behind him places are changing all the time with Clarke and Law resuming their race one battle. Law eventually ends his day with a big get off and series leader Murro pulls through to third to go into the final round as favourite for the title.

Brad celebrates his title with spannerman Tim Mace



GORDON CROCKARD

FOREIGN LANGUAGE!

'JUST GO QUACK HEY!' 'GIVE HER BIG LICKS SUR!' 'HOWLD HER AT IT!' – ALL WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT TO AN IRISHMAN IN AN IRISH GP

WORDS BY GORDON CROCKARD

FIRST OFF can I say hi and thank you to everyone who supported me, cheered me on, blew air horns down my ear, waved a programme or was just generally behind me at the Desertmartin Grand Prix.

I enjoyed listening to the advice a few people had the decency to give me, most of it went in one ear and out the other but I guess it showed they all wanted to see me up front.

Common encouragement and advice from Northern Ireland often makes me laugh... 'Just go quack hey!' 'Give her big licks sur!' 'Howld her at it!' 'Send her the message!' 'Keep her lit ye boy ye!' 'Get her on the poipe!' I'm sure you're getting my drift by now and hearing such things on race day really puts the fun back into it – it is a sport after all.

In Namur I was riding pretty good and showed good times in qualifying, ending up seventh in the end. I started moto one in around 10th and managed to finish the race sixth and I figured I'd be able to get a place or two higher in the second moto. Again I started 10th but this time I wanted to progress forward much faster than previously and went for a hard pass on James Noble. This turned out to be disastrous and I crashed off into the fencing after a bit of contact with James' bike. Way at the back and feeling sorry for myself I eventually finished 16th.

On the Tuesday after that Stefan Everts and I flew from Belgium to Belfast for the press launch of the Grand Prix of Northern Ireland. We were picked up in a stretch Hummer limo and taken to the Parliament buildings for an excellently covered event. We had some bikes to ride and we pulled some skids and wheelies for the TV cameras.

We had a quick bite of lunch then headed back to Belgium on the plane. We had a connection flight from Heathrow and were greeted with a three-hour delay for the final part of the journey so I didn't get back to Amy and the camper until two in the morning.

The next day I went practising with Joel Smets. I still felt tired from all the travelling but I met him at his house then we went to check out a couple of tracks for a look to see which one was roughest.

Joel is pretty hardcore and trains hard even now he's not doing GPs. I happened to notice a picture of him riding a bicycle backwards and instead of a seat he had wingmirrors on the seat post. Looking closer I could see he had racing numbers and all the requirements needed for racing bicycles. I asked him what the story was and he told me it was a race for charity having to ride a full mountain stage of the Tour de France – that's 3 hours 27 minutes up a mountain backwards! See what I mean about hardcore? He's not wise – I thought it was the Irish who were supposed to be stupid!

Our next stop was Wakes Colne for a British championship round and I was looking forward to a revised track. I've always had difficult days in the past at this track as my riding technique doesn't seem to work well on Halstead dirt. I was disappointed when it rained as I felt the club had put quite an investment into the event. I had two thirds on the day for third overall – I'll have to pull out all the stops at Hawkstone if I want to win a championship round this year.

After Wakes I had planned to race a Belgian international but I woke up the morning after the Maxxis round with a throat infection so I knew I wouldn't be racing and I ended up spending almost a week-and-a-half in bed. My training stopped and all sand practice was cancelled as I was feeling rotten and my home GP was fast approaching.

I was sixth in qualifying but felt awful and low on energy. I got out of the gate in the first race really well and was fifth after 10 minutes and honestly thinking I could get Kevin Strijbos who was just ahead of me. I got proper out of shape in the big whoops and was lucky not to crash but I tweaked my ankle and was in agony for the rest of the race but still got fifth.

Second moto I had another good start but it didn't last long as I touched Barragan on the take off to a jump, landed off-line in a series of bumps which resulted in me taking a heavy fall. The radiator was flattened and the clutch lever pointed up so I headed straight into the pits to get it straightened out.

I got going 50 seconds behind the last man but my ankle was hurting a lot. I'd used duct tape to fix it solid and riding was difficult so when I realised I wouldn't be scoring points at about three-quarters distance I pulled out having to accept my fifth place in moto one was all I could give.

After some MRI scans and x-rays the diagnosis of my ankle is ligament damage and severe bruising to the bones. It hurts and aches like hell but I'll continue to complete the year regardless.

I rode at the Dutch GP in Lierop but that was a big mistake looking back now. I was unprepared for the extreme sand due to the throat infection and ankle injury. I felt with my current form it was worth trying but I underestimated how badly prepared I was.

There are three important races left this season and I'm eager to perform well at them all – Hawkstone British championship, the French GP at Ernee and, of course, the MXdN. My training programme has been altered to protect my ankle and practising is on hold to preserve it from further damage but I still reckon I can do myself and country proud at these remaining events. Wish me luck!

Jim Pomeroy (Beta) scored his last-ever
world title points with a fine 4th place
in the 1979 West German 250 GP at Bielstein.

AMERICAN IDOL!

Jim Pomeroy - 1952-2006

A tribute by Jack Burnicle

THE RAIN poured down as I arrived on foot with camera case, sleeping bag and toothbrush for the 1979 West German MX GP at Bielstein. There was just one modest camper van nestled in a corner of the paddock. I staggered over and knocked, hopefully, on the door.

Within, American Jim Pomeroy and his girlfriend were enjoying a quiet, concentrated game of backgammon. Jim beckoned me inside and got on with the backgammon, introducing me to the rules and rudiments of the game as I dripped dry.

Unbeknown to both of us, that penultimate round of the world 250cc championship would prove to be Jim's last points scoring GP – just six years and six months after he'd hurtled to cult status as the first American to win an MX grand prix, at Sabadell, Spain, in 1973.

Jim Pomeroy died in a car crash on August 6 this year. He was 53.

Born into a biking family in Sunnyside, Washington, on November 16 1952, dad Don was a racer so Jim and his kid brother Ron almost inevitably followed suit.

Starting out as an 11-year-old on a Yamaguchi 55 and progressing through Yamaha 80, 100 and DM250 machines, the young 'Jimmy Lee' raced in flat-track, hill climbs, hare scrambles and motocross, heading up to Canada aged 16 and winning the Western Canadian MX title!

His rookie season in the AMA nationals kicked off with second place in the inaugural LA Coliseum SX of 1972. Victorious in the opening 250 outdoor round at Saddleback Park, the teenager ended the year fifth behind champion Brad Lackey in the 500 series and was picked alongside Lackey for America's first ever MX des Nations squad at Norg, in Holland, where they finished seventh.

Attracted to Europe, the lean six-footer signed a contract with a local Bultaco dealer that included a transatlantic trip to contest the opening GP of 1973 in Spain. Sabadell absolutely suited Jim. "I took the lead 300 yards off the start," he recalled. "It was a hard-packed, wide track and

smooth. I used a lot of flat-track technique. I didn't really use the front brake. I could ride two gears higher, flat-tracking the bike round the outside!"

He exploded on to the international scene with that historic victory, led the world championship and, having handed Bultaco their first ever GP win, landed a factory contract to race the whole series!

He mounted the rostrum again with second in Italy, won a moto in Poland and ended the year seventh in a series topped by Hakan Andersson.

For three further seasons the stylish Pomeroy, now a national hero in Spain, joined forces with legendary factory mechanic Rubio to race the 250 GPs, though 1974 began memorably back home with a win in the first ever indoor supercross at the Houston Astrodome!

Their European season was blighted by mechanical failures, his best results a pair of thirds in Belgium and Czechoslovakia. But he led the States to second place in the MX des in Sweden and took overall honours in the 250cc Trophee des Nations. He then returned home for the autumn Trans-Am championship and was top American behind Eurostars Roger de Coster, Gerrit Wolsink and Adolf Weil and ahead of Harry Everts!

The 1975 season brought Jim further grand prix successes at Retinne in Belgium and Wohlen in Switzerland and another seventh overall in the series. Then back home, the first Yank to win a Trans-Am race, he led that prestigious championship until sidelined by a knee injury.

Fully recovered for 1976, Pomeroy enjoyed his best-ever European GP season, finishing fourth overall in the world 250 series behind Heikki Mikkola and Russian duo Gennady Moiseev and Vladimir Kavinov. He also won 'Motorcyclist' magazine's 'Man of the Year' award.

Jim then joined Honda America for two years in the US. 1977 went well. Runner-up to a rampant Bob Hannah in the AMA supercross championship, he also ranked third in the 250 nationals, won one moto of the US 500GP at Carlsbad (the first Yank to do this) and placed sixth in the Trans-Am.

Pomeroy followed up a poor 1978 indoor season with fifth in the 250 nationals before he broke his collarbone at the Unadilla Trans-Am round. Honda wanted him to stay but Bimbo was already planning a return to Europe, initially with reigning 250 world champions KTM. Then Rubio persuaded him to rejoin Bultaco only for the Spanish factory to go bankrupt, leaving him to race a rare works Beta for the remainder of the year. And it was on this Italian rarity that Jim scored his final, fine fourth place in Germany.

Pomeroy turned out belatedly for Beta again in the early 500 GPs of 1980, then called it quits. At the tender age of 27 this brash, upbeat, likeable, larger-than-life character from the American north west set up his own training schools in the States.

I last saw him at a Vintage Iron reunion supporting the 1990 US 500GP at Glen Helen. Back injuries from a car crash three years earlier prevented him riding so brother Ron raced his Bultaco (what else!) while Jim contented himself with being the heart-and-soul of the party!

Since then he'd healed up and, in recent years, ridden the National Vintage MX 50+ championship on any Bultaco he could scrounge! He also came back to England for a twinshock GP at Canada Heights in 2003 and tragically died just days before he was due to thrill fans at this year's Nostalgia Scramble in Cumbria. It was typical of the man that Nostalgia organiser Ken Shuttleworth says "it was like losing a brother, we'd had such good craic on the phone".

The first American to win a GP, the first rider to win his debut GP race, the first American to lead a world MX championship, the first rider to win an MX GP on a Spanish bike (all in '73), the first winner of an indoor SX, the first non-world champion to win a Trophee des Nations (both '74), the first American to lead the Trans-Am series ('75) and the first American to win a moto in a US 500GP ('77). That's a pretty impressive CV.

RIP Jimmy Lee – and thanks for the backgammon lesson.



Tommy Gun shows the hopefuls the ropes

X-FACTOR!

Red Bull Rookies win a trip to Madrid X-Fighters

IT'S WET, windy and anything but summery but the hopefuls picked for the Red Bull X-Fighters selection day don't seem to mind.

And with six places on a trip to the mother of all freestyle events in Madrid up for grabs – plus the chance of some expert tuition from Tommy Searle – the candidates have every reason to be keen.

The riders have responded to a competition in the September issue of DBR and are at Cussey Gorse hoping to win a place on the trip and the chance to meet FMX legends including Travis Pastrana and Nate Adams. But first they have to turn laps of the main track and later the SX circuit while being judged on talent, passion and attitude.

Judging is always going to be a thankless task – all the hopefuls tick all the right boxes and to select just six to make the trip means a lot of disappointed faces as the results are announced.

After pounding out the laps and chatting to the judges the lucky six picked to fly out to the Madrid X-Fighters as guests of Red Bull are Sam Davis, Ryan King, Ashley Greedy, Lewis King, Josh Waterman and Jack Rowe.

"It's going to be great fun watching Travis Pastrana and all the top freestylers in Madrid," reckons Jack, the baby of the bunch at 12 years old. "I've been to America to watch supercross but I've never seen anything like X-Fighters before so I'm really excited."

Newly-crowned BYMX Premier champion Ashley Greedy is looking forward to his trip to Spain. "Madrid will be real exciting – I've never been to an event like X-Fighters before so it should be a good experience. It's been a great day and I've got a lot of riding done."

"Today's been one of my good days when I'm right on the pace – I tried hooking onto Tommy [Searle] for a while but didn't quite stay with him."



WHO SAID Kiwis are flightless? After losing a bet with Belgian TV presenter Cynthia Reekmans, Josh Coppins found himself plunging to earth from 4000 metres strapped to skydiving ace Willy Vets. "To jump out of a plane from 4000 metres isn't exactly what you're supposed to do," reckons Lizzard. "But it was a great experience, really great fun. You can also compare skydiving and motocross in the concentration and the precision you need – there is simply no room for error."



UPIBEAT UPDATE!

THERE'S LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL... AS SWORDY HITS THE ROAD TO RECOVERY...

WORDS BY STEPHEN SWORD PHOTO RAYARCHER.COM

HI EVERYONE, I'll start by giving you an update on the injury. Things are really improving now after a long time of not seeing much progress. I'm cycling every day and also spending a lot of time in the gym to slowly bring my fitness up to a good level.

I saw my doctor in Belgium last week and he was very satisfied with the way things were going and encouraged me to start walking and focussing on next season. It will take another couple of months to get strength and full movement back then I can look at getting back on my bike. I can't wait for that day to come.

I eventually got to make it to a race. Jodie and I booked a couple of cheap flights to Belfast for the GP at Desertmartin. It was a great feeling to be back at the races but of course I would much preferred to have been riding.

It was really nice to see my team after such a long time off and a real pleasure to sign some autographs again. I've watched most of the GPs on TV but I must say the racing in Desertmartin was the best so far.

I take my hat off to Josh Coppins – anyone that can beat Stefan Everts at all, let alone in sandy going deserves a big pat on the back. Well done Josh!

I had the pleasure of doing a bit of commentary work with Kenny Kay and really enjoyed the experience (that's not what you told me in the paddock Stevie – SL). After doing the

first three races with Kenny I watched the last race from the pit area.

Our flight back wasn't until Monday morning so we went out for some food with Jan and a few others on Sunday night. It was a nice evening that consisted of plenty of old motocross stories and predictions for the future.

My plan for the next couple of weeks is to get stuck into my training programme and make some good progress with my ankle movement. I may go to my trainer in Germany for some extra treatment in the next few days.

I'm also going to come to Hawkstone Park for the last British and also the des Nations. I'm really looking forward to watching the Nations and with home support I think our men can come up with a good result. I'm especially looking forward to the Everts/Carmichael showdown. Hopefully I'll be able to catch up with some of you guys at the races – if you see me come and say hello.

Sorry for rambling on a bit. You're probably thinking this guy has all month to do stuff and have time to think about what he's going to write but let me tell you that apart from going to physio, going to the doctors, the gym, cycling or bed I don't get up to much.

Well guys I must go. I've got my chores to do – cleaning up dog poo and mowing the lawn are top of the list. Mmmm, sounds good! Take it easy and I'll hopefully see you at the races.





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Happy Flapper?

You know how it is – one minute you've got it pinned into the dirt section of the X-Games supermoto course, the next you're giving it some serious Big Bird. Steve Drew does as he auditions for the new series of Sesame Street...

Sequence by Perlas/Hoppenworld.com





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WORDS BY STEVIE MILLS PHOTO BY SUTTY

HOMEBOYS!

GORDY AND MARTIN BARR FLY THE FLAG FOR IRELAND AT DESERTMARTIN

THE GRAND Prix of Northern Ireland was by all accounts a big success with some 18,000 paying spectators reported throughout the weekend.

Perhaps the figures are a little optimistic but what we really can be optimistic about is that the crowd consisted of many new faces not previously seen at a motocross event. Clearly the decision to run on Sunday helped swell the numbers despite a handful of protestors who made their feelings known at the entrance gate.

And many of our foreign visitors must have gone home somewhat confused as on an hourly basis all four seasons took it in turn to visit Desertmartin throughout the weekend. But the racing was good, although I must confess to have watched the GP on Eurosport – yes, a GP not 50 miles from my home and I watched it on TV!

Having collected the DBR crew from Belfast International Airport early on Saturday morning we headed towards the Desert, stopping at a roadside cafe to collect some dead animal for breakfast which turned out to be a bad idea (how could a breakfast pie ever be a bad idea? – SL).

Sutt Monster and the all-new Slimline Editor (Mr Lawless) booked into Castlewood Towers for an evening of light refreshments. And I must say that the said editor in question went to bed early (I started early – SL)! As did the Sutt Monster, who incidentally used up all the hot water for the bossman's shower the next morning. Oh, that girly scream nearly shattered all the windows in the house as hot water turned to cold!

Saturday morning was spent meeting with the guys at Pro-Carbon Racing, Matt Gardiner/Alloy and the Brave Heart brigade, Moto-One's Darren (whataboutya) Wilson and his always smiling sidekick Colin.

But I didn't return on the Sunday and it was nothing to do with the fact that every nutcase on this island was at Desertmartin that prevented me from going to watch the best riders in the world ply their trade. The so-called 'disabled viewing area' was, in a word, shameful! Simple as that...

Crock Star's fine fifth place in the first moto was even more impressive due to the fact that the big man wrenched his ankle at the 15-minute point of the moto. Race two unfortunately ended at corner three – Gordon remounted but was unable to collect further points.

And what about Martin Barr? The pressure must have been at boiling point, yet this young man dug deep and qualified through his heat race in 11th position. We knew Martin would make good if he managed to get

his Bike-It/Dixon Yamaha to the startgate of the GP and he was running well in the points when a mechanical gremlin robbed him. Not gating well second time around, he came from behind to score a creditable 18th place at the flag – you could not have wiped the smile from his face.

Despite their best efforts Phil McCullough and Robert Hamilton failed to make the grade in MX1, as did Wayne and Jason Garrett and Stuart Edmonds in the MX2 class.

With the season coming to an end and the silverware heading towards Ballymena our thoughts drift towards the annual spectacle called SX. The date has been released for the 2006 Events 22 spectacular at the Odyssey Arena in Belfast – November 24/25.

Last year was the best yet and with that in mind I would advise early ticket bookings if you intend having a row of seats for friends and family. Matt Bates and his Events 22 company are working flat out to make Odyssey '06 the best SX in Europe. A star studded international field of supercross racers, spectacular freestyle action and celebrity-filled minibike racing under one roof with beer on tap sounds just about right to me.

There's only one round of the Irish national championship left to run and I hope the Ferns club have better weather than the Armagh and District MCC. The penultimate round of the Irish series was cancelled due to continuous rain. Gone be the days when 'scrambling' meant just that. When was the last time a British championship round or GP was cancelled because of rain? I believe that a champion should be decided over a series of racing on different tracks in all types of conditions.

It's musical saddles time again and all eyes will be on GC – will he sign for another season at Wulfsport with Roger or will he move to a European squad for '07? Blarney will have full details of bums on saddles for next month's issue.

Ireland now boasts a new indoor MX venue! The brainchild of Chris Montgomery, Dirtworx is situated just off the Larne road outside Belfast. There will be limited membership available so give Chris a call on 07928 272048. The track itself looks deceiving – with safety in mind the jumps are well designed to cater for all levels of rider from youth to adult. A full-on winter minibike series will kick off next month at the Dirtworx venue which will provide entertainment throughout those dark winter months.

BIG PHIL McCULLOUGH
FAILED TO MAKE THE CUT
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JONTY'S BOX

WORDS AND PHOTO BY JONTY EDMUNDS

NUMBER ONE! AGAIN!

IT'S SAID TO BE HARDER TO DEFEND A WORLD TITLE THAN IT IS TO WIN ONE IN THE FIRST PLACE BUT IT SEEMS NO-ONE TOLD DAVID KNIGHT THAT...

THERE ARE several things the '06 FIM World Enduro Championship will be remembered for but above all else it is the dominance of Manxman David Knight that will, for most, be the season's defining memory.

While French newcomer Johnny Aubert arrived with a bang, Swede Joakim Ljunggren emerged as the future king of Swedish enduro and the series itself travelled to pastures new, Knighter delivered seven devastating and demoralising blows to his Enduro 3 class mates, the like of which have never been seen before. Expected to successfully defend his E3 world championship having been the most dominant rider in the class in '05, no-one – not even David – expected him to make winning a championship look as easy as he did this year.

But the most impressive thing about Knighter's '06 E3 world championship is the way in which he won his crown. While simply scoring one-point more than any other competitor would have been enough to lift the title, winning each and every day of the series leading up to winning the title is something few, if any, riders have ever done before in the WEC. It didn't happen by accident, it didn't happen because of weak opposition and it certainly didn't happen because DK got lucky. It happened because Knighter wanted to win more than any other rider.

Before most of his rivals had finished eating their Christmas leftovers Knighter put himself on a plane and headed to the States for two weeks of intensive pre-season training around the jump-littered tracks of southern California. The reason he travelled to the US and not to the more traditional southern European enduro training grounds was simple. David realised that despite winning on all but one day of the '05 series his speed on motocross tracks – and I mean proper motocross tracks – could be improved.

Despite establishing himself as the world's fastest enduro rider Knighter acknowledged there was room for improvement. And by heading to SoCal and hooking up with the likes of Travis Pastrana, Seb Tortelli and numerous other US and European motocross stars he could train with – and learn from – the best of the best. He then headed home to compete in numerous indoor and extreme events where he showed he was more than ready to defend his E3 title.

But Knighter's biggest challenge lay ahead – the WEC's first ever winter enduro, the opening round of the '06 series. Confident that he could win in countries he'd raced in before, fitting studded tyres to his factory KTM and racing in sub-zero conditions was a whole different story. With his expected closest championship rival Marko Tarkkala having grown up using spiked tyres during the long Scandinavian winters, Knighter knew that winning in Sweden would be harder than in any other country. He also knew that if he were to stand any chance at all of topping the E3 podium in Ostersund he would have to 'get his head around riding on ice'. So Knighter packed his bags a full 10 days before the opening round of the season, headed to northern Sweden alone and began watching, learning and perfecting his ice racing skills.

In winning the opening round of the '06 WEC season outright Knighter proved two things. Firstly, despite having serious doubts himself that he would be able to win, he showed the world just how much he wanted to retain his E3 title. Secondly, he proved that a non-Scandinavian could win a winter enduro.

What followed was David Knight at his very best. In Portugal, Spain, Italy, Canada and the States he claimed win after win after win while his rivals were forced to acknowledge that they didn't stand a hope in hell of beating him. The tougher the race the bigger the winning margin. The bigger the winning margin the bigger the smile on Knighter's face. The end result of a season of hard work? A well deserved second E3 world championship.

While he may not have been going for a 10th world championship title, Knighter's achievements in '06 have nonetheless been highly impressive. Expected to win as he did in '05, over the course of a season David has proved that he is undoubtedly number one. Not just in the Enduro 3 class but in the World Enduro Championship.

The '07 WEC will be a lesser championship without Knighter who's heading Stateside for his next big challenge. And with his unquestionable work ethic and desire to succeed, DK will no doubt meet this new challenge – that of winning next season's US Grand National Cross Country series – head-on!

Knighter signs autographs for his young fans



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SILICON SEARCH

I'm 15 years old and I've been riding and reading DBR for about two years.

I've got a 2003 KX125 and I'm after some CV4 radiator hoses for it. I've found a shop in America that sells them but they don't ship out of the States – do you know anywhere in England that sells them?

Leo, Staffordshire

We're not sure where you can buy CV4 hoses from in the UK but we do know that high quality silicon hoses manufactured by SFS Performance are available through the Madison dealer network in a variety of colours. Check out www.ultimatepursuits.co.uk to find your nearest stockist.



STUDLEY SCOTT

My name is Scott and I'm 14. I'm just getting into motocross and all that and I don't really know what I'm talking about when it comes to MX clothes. I was just wondering if you could suggest any good stuff that would make me look the part and not just a newcomer nerd!

Also, do you know of any tracks that are near Studley (it's near Stratford)? Please keep printing your magazine – it's about the only thing that keeps me sane.

Scott, Studley

We reckon your best bet is to head to Stratford super-dealer Ride MX for plenty of motocross fashion and practice track advice. You can find Ride MX on the Western Road Industrial Estate. Check out www.ridemx.com for directions to the shop.

JOB HUNTER!

Hi there, I've been involved in motocross all my life riding, watching and working on bikes. I'm now 23 and would really like to go into spannering for a team. I appreciate you have to start at the bottom of the ladder but where is the bottom of this ladder? I don't know where I would even begin on this quest. Are there qualifications required? Can you please point me in any kind of direction at all? Thanks!

Michael, Shropshire

We reckon your best bet is to get to the races and speak to the teams direct. They'll be able to give you the best advice as they're the people in the know. Good luck!

MX DES DISASTER?

Who the hell picks the des Nations team? Nunn on a 450! Don't get me wrong, he can ride a 250F as quick if not quicker than anyone else on his day but he has proved on more than one occasion that he can't ride a big bike whereas Noble can run with best on them. Who ever picks the team really does need to take another look!

Nunny also rode crap at Matterley this year, Noble was running a strong top 10 until Crockard's handlebar went into his ribs making breathing difficult for James during the rest of the day.

McNeil, via email

SWEET MUSIC

Where are all the two-stroke screamers going? Four-strokes are taking over, why?

Apart from the obvious power delivery difference I can't see the attraction – they almost seem lazy.

In the glory days of two-strokes the bikes sounded alive as if the engines were going to rip out of their frames. The sweet screams of the 125s are like music to my ears – as are the throaty barks of the 250s. Today these are just sounds in my memory that will never die.

On a lighter note keep up the good work and come on Tommy Gun!

Gaz, via email

Yeah we miss the noise of two-strokes being ridden hard too but it seriously seems like we'll have to make do with raspberry blowing four-poppers for the immediate future.

ROMANIAN READER

Hi, I am Robert. I am 17 years old and I live in the city of Petrosani in Romania. I've read your magazine for the first time – I've got it from Team DBR when the Romanians passed my city. I really enjoyed the show.

Meeting the DBR crew was great, they were the nicest team out there and they gave me a free hat, the magazine and the bug for racing. When I have enough money I will also start riding – where I live it's very hard to get a motorbike but hopefully I will manage.

I would love to have the October issue of Dirt Bike Rider with the Romanians report.

Robert, Petrosani

PS Sorry for the bad English.

Your English is a whole lot better than our Romanian so we're not gonna complain. Glad you liked the magazine and good luck with your future racing career.

MINI WARRIOR

It's my pleasure to say that I read such a fantastic magazine every month. DBR has everything in it except for one or two things. You always review full size bikes but never the kids' bikes such as 65s and 85s bikes. You also cover nearly all the adult championships but not the youth ones.

Every month I look forward to youth bike reviews and championship events but it's just not there so could you please try include some of these in the future.

James, via email

I think you'll already find most of the top youth championship events covered in our Rage section but 65 and 85cc bike tests can be more of a problem. We're looking into it so keep your eyes peeled...

FMX FAN!

Well DBR I got a problem or two. I'm motocross mad and especially a little FMX crazy. My favourite freestyler is Jeremy Stenberg aka Twitch. I dig his style of riding and his attitude.

Apart from watching motocross on TV I go to watch it at various tracks and love playing games like MX Vs ATV Unleashed and I might get the Crusty Demons game when it's released. But back to my problem...

I wish I could ride but I can't afford a bike – I look on eBay and in Bike Trader but they're all too much for me to pay for. Do you know where I might find cheaper bikes for sale? My second problem is when I get a motocross bike where will I be able to ride it.

Jordan, North Yorks

We reckon your best bet for finding second-hand bikes is to pick up a copy of T+MX from your local newsagent – it's available each and every Friday. You'll also find details of practice tracks, clubs and races in your local area. Good luck!

PACKAGE POSER

I was just wondering if you know of any motocross package holidays for me and my mate to go on?

Jamie, Cumbria

Check out the MX Heaven feature in this month's mag. Not only do Stefan and the gang run a top notch training camp but they also run Ride Trip holidays that include a visit to an AMA motocross or supercross event as well as three or four days riding. If California's not your thing it's also worth checking out www.motocross365.com for visits to Tenerife.

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Sixsixone's Raji gloves are probably the lightest and most highly vented motocycle gloves on the dirt bike market today which makes them ideal for anyone who runs hefty handguards or only races on rock free tracks to wear if they're not keen on slipping their hands into bulky, padded gloves.

Price: £23.99

Supplier: dsmoffroad.com

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SHIFT RACING

FACTION RACEWEAR

If all goes to plan Shift should be shifting a shiftload of this all-new Faction kit and if they do it's little wonder because the designers must have been working double shifts to cram all the Shifty goodness you can see in these Shift pants, jersey and gloves. So go buy some now before the shift hits the fan!

Price: Jersey £34

Pants £115

Gloves £28

Supplier: shifteurope.com

0191 487 6100

SIXSIXONE

HURRICANE FLIGHT HELMET

Mmmmm, white trim helmets are all the rage this season and Sixsixone have jumped right on up to the bandwagon with their updated Hurricane Flight helmet.

Price: £199.99

Supplier: dsmoffroad.com

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PETERSEN RACING

DEEP SUMP

If you've got 35 quid burning a hole in your sky rocket and you fancy buying something that looks wicked while working well you could do a lot worse than give Big Bad Bob a call at Petersen Racing so you can relieve him of one of his blue or red Deep Sumps while he relieves you of your cashola.

The Deep Sump basically replaces the drain plug on your Keihin FCR carburettor helping to stop fuel contamination by keeping any dirt or water deep down inside its foam-filter filled interior.

Price: £34.99 plus P+P

Supplier: petersenracing.co.uk

01409 220288





GSP RACING

TITANIUM FOOTPEGS

Most children of the '80s carry scars on their shins from where their BMX's bear-trap pedals took a hefty chunk of flesh from the front of their legs. Considering those puny BMX pedals were called bear-traps the only suitable name for these ultra-sharp GSP units has to be crocodile-catchers.

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SKIN INDUSTRIES

GIRLY TEES

If Hector the Halloween Tangerine had a girlfriend (which he doesn't by the way – he's a fruit) he'd be sure to hook her up with some of this quality Skin Industries girls' gear from Freestylextreme.

And with Christmas just around the corner it wouldn't be a bad idea to splash out on your sister, lover or even your mother because extra brownie points could be vital if you're gonna get what you want this festive season.

Price: £19.99

Supplier: freestylextreme.com

0117 967 2240



ALPINESTARS

TECH 10 STICKER KIT

If you're sick of the clean-cut look of your plain white Alpinestars Tech 10s then these sticker kits could just be the thing you need to brighten up your boots!

Price: £34.95

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CI SPORT 01372 378000

THOR HERO GOGGLE

Although he's a very scary looking chap, Hector the Halloween Tangerine understands the need for quality protection what with him being a relatively squashy fruit and all. And when you're out riding your eyes need protecting too because if a rock hits 'em at 40-odd miles an hour they're also gonna be relatively squishy.

So be a smart fruit like Hector and hook yourself up with a pair of Thor Hero goggles that not only look pretty darn cool but also come with an optically correct, mirror-smoked lexan lens with an anti-fog coating which also protects your eyes from ultra harmful UV rays.

While they're in no way guaranteed to keep big, scary rocks out of your eyes (no motocross goggles are) they should help deflect dirt, dust and other debris from your precious peep-holes.

Price: £44.99

Supplier: ultimatepursuits.co.uk



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With former business partner Dave Grant

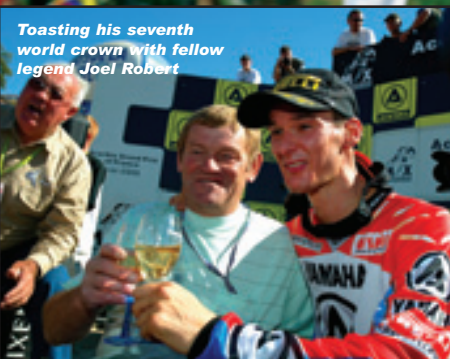


Everts the daddy: "Liam is the nicest thing which has happened to me in my life"

Another 1-1 card for Stefan – this time in Japan



Toasting his seventh world crown with fellow legend Joel Robert



Another world title – this time in '03



Kaposvar '91 – his first GP win



LEGEND!

The son of a four-time world champion, Stefan Everts was born to race. Over 18 years of GPs he's rewritten the record books with his 10 world titles, 100 GP wins and 170 GP moto victories. As the 33-year-old Belgian prepares to roll up to the gate for the last time, we take a look back at a glittering career...

Words and photos by Alex Hodgkinson



STEFAN EVERTS goes to Ernee this weekend to set the seal on a GP career stretching over 18 years in which the 33-year-old has won 10 world titles, been second four times and third once, taking 100 (before Ernee) overall GP wins and counting with 170 (before Ernee) moto successes along the way.

The record champ took time out recently to natter with Alex Hodgkinson about milestones – some good, some bad. In a beat poet-style stream-of-consciousness interview, 'Orrible' O'dge threw a few names and places at Stefan and let the voice recorder roll...

DBR: Aged 16 in Maastricht...

SE: "I had been riding a 250 for a couple of years already but it was the first time I had raced one. It was a tough one to jump on a 250 in a big supercross and I struggled. I had some big crashes and I wasn't under control. That's unusual for me and I think that race came too soon.

"I have always had the feeling that I want to be in control no matter what I do, whether I am riding my bike or anything else. I rode a lot of BMX when I was a kid and when I tried a new double jump I always had to be sure in myself that I could clear it. I have always been mad with myself when I crash.

"But when you are young and still growing in the GP sport you have to search for your limits and sometimes it can hurt. But there's no way around it if you want to win.

"There was no plan to start my adult career at Maastricht, it just happened that that race was the day after my 16th birthday. I hadn't really been waiting for that birthday to come like so many Belgian teenagers before me because I got lucky – the Belgian federation had brought in a new class for 15 and 16-year-olds in 1988 called the 'Beloften', that means 'promise for the future', so I had already had a few races on a 125."



DBR: Kaposvar 1991...

SE: "I can never forget my first GP victory. I had already had some big battles with Donny Schmit that year and he had usually been winning but that day I made fastest time in qualification, got good starts and he couldn't catch me.

"When you chase your first title it's always difficult to know if you are going about it the right way, you just take it one race at a time and try to stay consistent. Now I know what I am doing and have things under control but back then I was still searching for the right attitude.

"I think that day convinced me that I could go for the title but on the other hand it put more pressure on me because Donny crashed in the second moto and I took over the lead in the series and that makes stress. But I won the next two GPs and I was on my way."

DBR: Northeim 1992...

SE: "That's another day I will never forget because I was 20 minutes away from being dead. It was my first year in the 250s and I was leading the series from the first GP but I crashed with Bader Manneh at the start of the first moto and had to pull out of the race with bent handlebars.

"My head was not so clear that day and I



crashed again at the start of the second moto. I had so much pain in my stomach but I was so disappointed at losing the points lead that I didn't want to go to the Red Cross. At first I just went back to the motorhome but then the doctor came and told me this was serious, I had burst my spleen and I must go immediately to the hospital.

"It was a very painful day but one thing I will never forget is that when I woke up early the next morning, between six and seven, the first thing I saw was Donny and Carrie Schmit standing next to my bed. That was very emotional, the sign which they gave to me by simply being there."

DBR: Sylvain Geboers...

SE: "He was a very important person in my career. He gave me a great opportunity – getting me a place in the factory Suzuki team straight away when I was 16 – and I raced for him for five years. The first title came very fast and I am very thankful and it is sad that it ended up with bad feelings.

"That came because I wanted a new challenge. I wanted to make my own decisions and Sylvain always wanted to tell me how to do everything. I had started there as a boy but we came to the point where I was leaving and he

couldn't control me anymore. I think it was a tough moment for him but I needed to do that, to grow and to become my own person."

DBR: Giuseppe Luongo...

SE: "He is a very strong person in motorsport and has been around for a lot longer than many people realise. He was already involved when he organised the Masters of Motocross in the late '80s and then the Bieffe Suzuki team with Sylvain.

"We all want to achieve something in life and that goes for Giuseppe too. He is trying to make motocross bigger and, if he succeeds, then everyone will profit. At one point some people have been the victim of certain things but hopefully that will turn around and I hope that he will succeed. In his position you have to be a very strong person but you can never satisfy everybody. We had our ups and downs but for me that is in the past and we have to look to the future. I think that goes for both of us."

DBR: US supercross...

SE: "When I was a teenager it was not as big as it is now. For a long time it was a dream of mine but I should have gone as early as possible. Waiting for one more year, waiting for one more championship, you get too far.

My advice to any kid who wants to go there is not to waste time, just go immediately because you sooner you adapt to the new world there the better."

DBR: Bercy...

SE: "I did it a few times but the first time I went there in 1990 was the nicest experience. It is so tight and I think it is much more suitable to the MX2. 1990 I won two nights and was second the other to be the Prince of Bercy on the 125 after battles with Denny Stephenson and Buddy Antunez who were the upcoming kids in America that year.

"The year later I rode 250 and I was one time on the podium in third but I didn't feel good. The place was too tight for the bigger bike. Back then they raced four nights and I was just so excited the first night I blew it."

DBR: Greg Albertyn...

SE: "We had some battles but they were more in the newspapers than on the track. The years we raced for the 250 title we never really had a head-to-head on the track. 1993 he was so good in the starts and I was always in the back trying to fight my way through the pack and in 1994 we both had so much bad luck with our bikes and then I broke my collarbone.

We changed the lead in the championship but it was a battle at arm's length."

DBR: Kawasaki with Alec Wright...

SE: "Everyone had always warned me to be careful of Alec but I never had a single problem with him. He was always straight with me and I think it was very sad when Kawasaki had a big party to celebrate 20 years in the GPs and their first title with me in 1995 – the year after he finished – and he didn't even get mentioned for the 19 years he had put in. I think that broke his heart.

"He was good to me, he gave me everything I asked for. I wanted to work with Jan De Groot, he arranged for him to join Kawasaki, I wanted Harry Nolte as mechanic, I got him. He put everything into place and the year after he stopped I won the title."

DBR: Penalties...

SE: "I have been the victim of several during my career but the penalties can be more serious for a top rider like me than for someone riding for 20th place and I feel that the penalty should match the offence.

"I got a suspended sentence of two years but there are others who were involved with doping tests and they only got six months. For me, to be involved with doping is worse than throwing your goggles at somebody – as simple as that – and I still have a bad feeling about that.

"Also noise and fuel. I got the points back for the fuel in 1996 but I also lost the title in 1998 because I had points taken away for noise in Venezuela after something which happened in the start. I actually had already a disadvantage in power with that and then I got a penalty too. I think they should do the test before the start of the race to see if your bike is within the rules and not to penalise you because your bike got damaged in a collision. To get a penalty of one minute when it's not your fault is hard.

"We won the fuel thing and proved that it's not cheating and it is so easy to make a mix-up with the cans and contamination. The bikes and

everything should be within the rules but when there is no advantage and it's a genuine mistake they should not take away the points."

DBR: Sebastien Tortelli...

SE: "I think he needs to learn where his limit is because he goes over it. He is physically so strong and well-trained that he gets away with it many times – 98 times it works out good but the 99th time he goes down hard.

"All the years he has been racing, there have only been two years where it went good and he won two world titles but every other year he got hurt. Like in Portugal this year. He was faster than me and he should have ridden a more technical race instead of trying to attack the whole race. You are better to wait for your moment and work it out but he didn't."

DBR: Dave Grant...

SE: "We had our great years together and Dave taught me a lot about business. But at one point he wasn't there anymore, he was losing interest. I had placed all my trust in him and that was my own fault. What happened with the money, the business, the company, the team, that was my fault. The ironic thing is that when we started together I remember that Dave said to me that it would all end in tears.

"But Dave is a guy who can do something for a few years, putting everything into it and then he gets tired of it and loses interest. That is what happened and he just let it go and it all went wrong. And that is Dave's biggest problem. He has been involved in golf, motocross, so many things and he is now in car racing and everywhere he only stays a few years until he gets tired of it and needs a new challenge.

"I lost a lot of money but I learnt a lot from it, I got a second chance with Yamaha and I can say now that it made me much more mature."

DBR: Beaucaire...

SE: "Another black beast in my career. And it wasn't just once but twice, the second exactly one year after the first – 1999 with my knee,

2000 with my arm. But, you know, I always try to take something positive out of everything that happens to me and the first injury in 1999 was almost a relief, taking a holiday after the doctor was able to assure me that my knee would be okay in the end. I had been racing for so many years, always with the pressure to be number one.

"The second year was a real downer but even there I was able to see how the whole thing with Dave was going down. I had time to look and it opened my eyes. Everything was going wrong and we had to do something. But Dave was faster than me, he said first that he wanted to stop and sell me the team. Suddenly figures were being thrown around my ears and it was crazy.

"I'm not really superstitious but when something like that happens exactly one year on it is like this year when I lost the first moto at the first two GPs wearing the white gear and won every time in blue.

"I said at first I would never go back but in the end I did in 2002, the last race they ever had there. I had decided that I would go a few weeks earlier but I didn't let anybody know until a couple of days before the race. I had to go back and prove something but I didn't want the weeks of hassle, people asking me all the time about it."

DBR: Yamaha...

SE: "You know, already as a kid, blue was always my favourite colour – it's such a nice, soft colour. Michele Rinaldi had already been trying for years to sign me and he still had confidence in me even after my two years of injury. We first started talking at Grobbendonk in 2000 when I tried to come back and hurt my knee again after 20 minutes. Laurens was there from Yamaha too and they were having some friction with Andrea Bartolini which opened up a place in the team for me.

"We have had our ups and downs but, in general, Rinaldi Yamaha has been the best team ever. They are very professional and when I was having a tough time, like at the start of



Teutschenthal '98



With Joel Smets in '96 at Beaucaire



Hunting down
Pichon in '05



2003, Michele and Carlo would come and have a quiet chat, talking everything through. Michele almost took on a father role, giving his experience and advice and I see how he has done that with all of his riders.

"I remember the long talk we had at Leipzig airport after Teutschenthal. I was riding so well in the week, I was in good shape, I was so happy with the new 450F but I was struggling in the races. I knew it was a button in my head but I didn't know how to click the switch.

"Back in the winter we had already talked about racing a few double GPs with the 250F but then they changed the race order and the idea had been dropped. And it was Michele who brought up the idea again, to race the 250F to loosen up for the MXGP.

"And who can argue with the facts? We have been together for six years and we have won six world titles."

DBR: Joel Smets...

SE: "Particularly for our fans it was always a battle, who was the best. Joel proved a lot and I admire him for that. He is not the most technical rider but he is a hard worker and is an example to young people that you don't need to be super-talented to achieve success. Joel is a big example for the kids that you cannot get anywhere without hard work."

DBR: Marnicq Bervoets...

SE: "We have been very good friends for a long time. It was hard when we were racing each other for the title because some things happened that were not so nice. I still have a

bad feeling about the protest in France when he crashed over the fence – even though the protest was coming from the team, not me.

"That threatened to destroy our friendship but we got it back and raced together in the same team at Yamaha. You know, back in the early days we had always joked about being team-mates and in the end it happened."

DBR: Namur...

SE: "It's still a very special place for me, even if they have changed things over the years. The first time I raced there in 1998 as a wild card in the 500 GP was so nice. Back then you raced past the Chalet Du Monument and it was still a roadside cafe with the fans hanging over the fence drinking beer and we raced all the way to the wall and turned up the steps on the concrete. The track has been changed but it is still Namur, the Citadel, the Esplanade, it feels like you are racing in the town and I always get a special feeling there with the fans, the noise in the woods, the whole atmosphere.

"And then there was the 50th GP win of my career in 2001, equalling Joel Robert's record. This man and his records had been a focus for me for so many years because he had all the records for so long and it seemed like they would never be beaten. I think it was after my first 250 title that I said to myself that I wanted to go for those records.

"You know, I don't speak French but I remember saying to him many times 'tu six fois champion du monde mais un jour moi sept fois [roughly translates as 'you six times champion of the world but one day me seven times']'."

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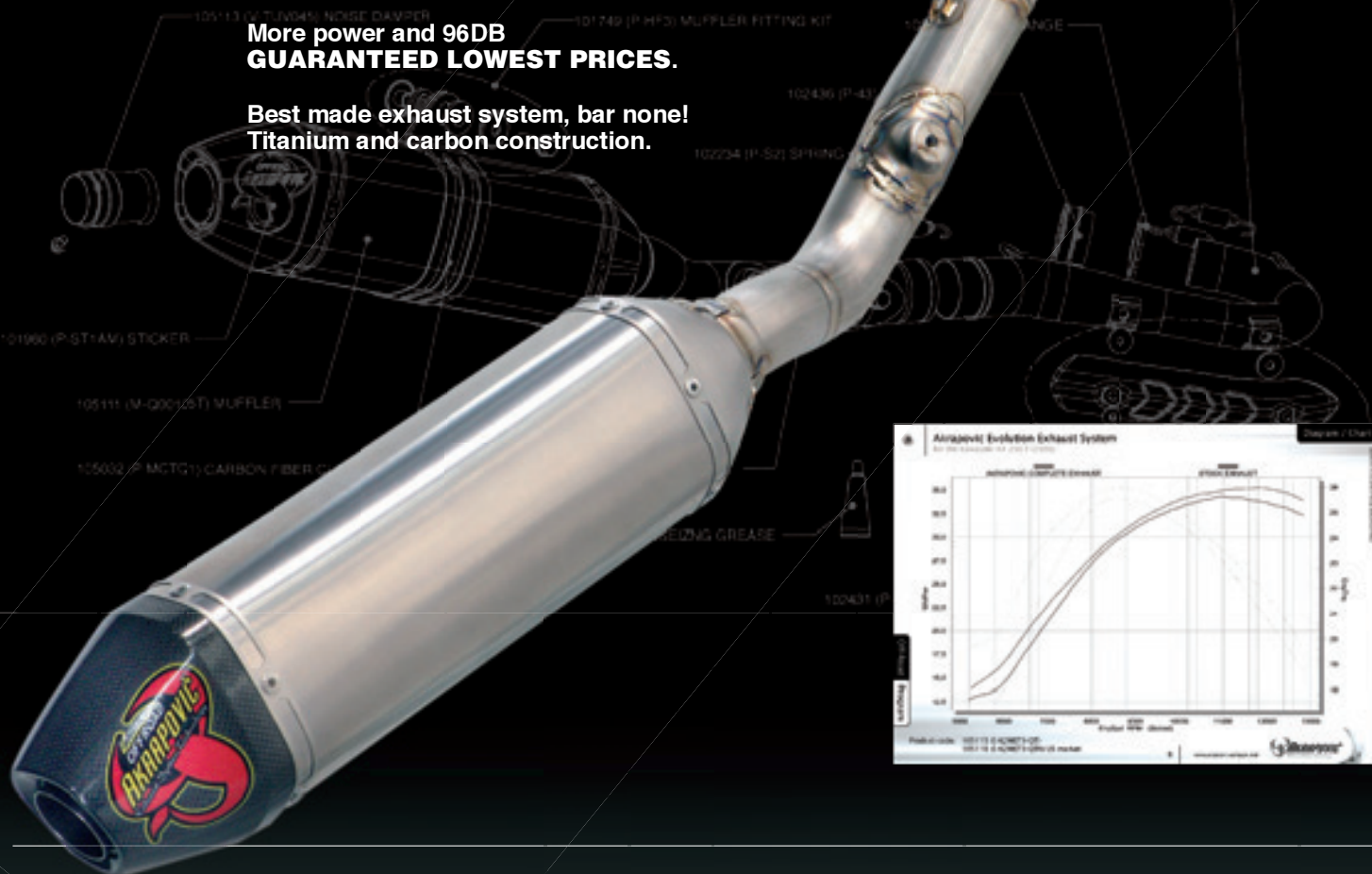


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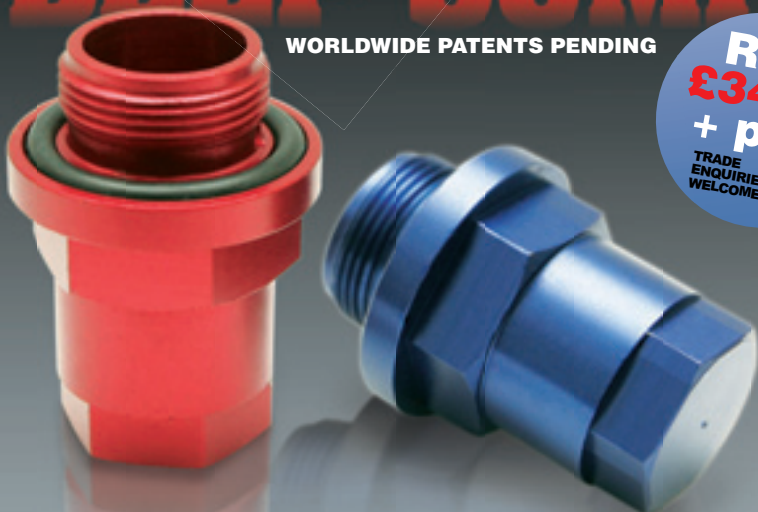
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MXdN '04



With Joel Robert after equalling his 50 GP wins at Namur in '01

"And Joel used to tell me when I win my seventh title he was going to come and drink a glass of champagne with me on the podium. And we had our champagne on the podium at Ernee. We just sat there together surrounded by thousands of people but that was just our moment, a moment for us."

DBR: Joel Robert...

SE: "He is a special man. We have been together so many times with the Belgian Motocross des Nations team and I just love listening to his stories about his time, like when he made the trip to Russia to win his sixth title and it took a complete week on the train to get there and to get back, how he would go riding in the mountains for days and that was what made him such a good mud rider, he would have parties on Saturday and still win GPs on Sunday. He should write a book."

"Joel has always been so down-to-earth and in a way it's a pity because he was the greatest. But his stature in the public eye was never so high as Roger De Coster or Eric Geboers."

"I mean, I was born in the year Joel won his last title so I don't know anything of it and it wasn't until you explained to me how it was back in the early '60s, how Belgian motocross had gone into decline after the great years of the '50s and that Joel started a dynasty of champions which has continued to this day. Without him perhaps it would never have happened."

"Joel is just a simple man but, inside his heart, he is the sweetest man you could ever meet."

DBR: Ernee 2003...

SE: "Winning three GPs in one day has to be the greatest single achievement of my career. I was so physically shattered after that."

"Pascal Haudiquet had joked about it a few times during the year when I started to win two classes in a day and then when I secured the seventh title at Loket I asked Laurens and he said Yamaha were interested too. I never expected that answer and I had to decide by the Wednesday because I had to enter the race and they had to prepare a bike for me. I slept on it and the next morning I said 'let's go for it'."

"When it was first mentioned I had kept telling myself it was impossible but I kept my feet on the ground. I knew it was the only time I, or anybody else, would ever be able to do it."

We were changing back to two motos per class the next year so I knew that if I managed it, it would be unique. Even if I had not won all three I would still be the only guy who even tried it."

"But the desire to create this new record was in my mind all day and kept the adrenalin pumping and ending the season on 72 career wins was just a bonus."

DBR: Mickael Pichon...

SE: "He can be very fast but his weak point is his mental strength. He has been many times up and down. But when he was in front in 2001 and 2002 he was very strong. We had some tough battles like Austria in 2003 where we banged around a lot but neither of us complained."

"We were racing hard and banged each other but there is a difference to taking somebody out. It's not fair to take a guy out on purpose and that was why I was so angry in South Africa."

"When I read his comments afterwards I can see that he thought I had seen him coming and he didn't try to take me out but it was a misunderstanding. I just never saw him and continued my corner – if I had seen him coming I would have braked like I did this year when I saw Kevin Strijbos coming down the inside down the hill at Montevarchi."

DBR: Kelly...

SE: "You know the expression that behind every great sportsman there is a great sportswoman and I am very lucky that I have found Kelly. All through the bad times, through the Grant affair, the injuries, everything, she is the one who kept thinking clearly and kept me strong."

"I kept believing in my abilities but there was so much else going on and she keeps my feet on the ground. She is just as dedicated as me and is always there for me, helping me with everything off the track but she never gets involved with the racing, the training. She keeps everything in balance."

DBR: Liam...

SE: "Liam is the nicest thing which has happened to me in my life. It makes me realise why we are on this planet, to have a family and produce children, to have this feeling, to see your own blood growing up. I am just so afraid if something would ever happen to him, if he burns himself or falls off somewhere – children

are so vulnerable but you get so much back from them."

"I just love Kelly and Liam to be at the race, helping me to relax. Now he is starting to speak and get interested in the bikes, every year brings something new and your kids only grow up once – I don't want to miss a minute of it."

"But I'm trying to be a good father, to be tough with him and make sure he listens. If he asks for a bike okay but if he does crazy things without thinking then I will take it away. I will not push him to race when he is seven or eight and I won't let him do it even if he wants to if I think it is too much. I don't think it is good to let kids race 30 weekends a year and at that age he needs to be riding or racing purely for fun. He needs to enjoy himself, it has to be a hobby, school is important and he needs energy to grow."

DBR: Harry...

SE: "He has been the red wire through my entire career, especially at the beginning. He never pushed me to ride but when I started to race he told me straight, 'we go for it for three years and if it's not happening it's finished because it's costing a lot of money'. He was a tough father and he showed me the way to be a champion."

"It's a difficult time because you are a teenager and you think you know better. The last thing you want to accept is advice from your parents – you will accept it from strangers but not from them and it is only years later that you realise how much they did for you."

"We had a lot of battles and I have to thank my mother too. She kept the balance a bit at the beginning but my dad has been there, whenever I needed him, through my entire career."

"He was always on my shoulders to do better and it has rubbed off on myself, never to be satisfied, to always want to do better. No matter how good you are there is always some detail which could be better."

DBR: 10...

SE: "The magical number! When I got to seven I had achieved my goal to break Joel Robert's records but it was he who kept telling me that I could go for 10. I kept saying 'no, that's too far' but then the eighth title came and I gave myself two more years. Suddenly 10 was not so far away anymore and it gave me a new target."

"I think, riding wise, I could go for 11 but



With Sebastian Tortelli in '98



Winning at Namur is always super-sweet for Stefan



Loket '03

Perfect 10!





Kelly, Liam and dad Harry



Namur '06 - perfect 10

The titles

1991 – 125cc

1 Stefan Everts	(Suzuki)	377 points
2 Bob Moore	(KTM)	368
3 Pedro Tragter	(Suzuki)	259

1995 – 250cc

1 Stefan Everts	(Kawasaki)	423 points
2 Marnicq Bervoets	(Suzuki)	380
3 Tallon Vohland	(Kawasaki)	338

1996 – 250cc

1 Stefan Everts	(Honda)	390 points
2 Marnicq Bervoets	(Suzuki)	381
3 Tallon Vohland	(Kawasaki)	346

1997 – 250cc

1 Stefan Everts	(Honda)	528 points
2 Marnicq Bervoets	(Suzuki)	377
3 Pit Beirer	(Honda)	349

2001 – 500cc

1 Stefan Everts	(Yamaha)	295 points
2 Joel Smets	(KTM)	274
3 Marnicq Bervoets	(Yamaha)	211

2002 – 500cc

1 Stefan Everts	(Yamaha)	268 points
2 Joel Smets	(KTM)	229
3 Javier Garcia Vico	(KTM)	225

2003 – MXGP

1 Stefan Everts	(Yamaha)	275 points
2 Joel Smets	(KTM)	235
3 Mickael Pichon	(Suzuki)	188

2004 – MX1

1 Stefan Everts	(Yamaha)	688 points
2 Mickael Pichon	(Honda)	620
3 Josh Coppins	(Honda)	564

2005 – MX1

1 Stefan Everts	(Yamaha)	721 points
2 Josh Coppins	(Honda)	652
3 Ben Townley	(KTM)	589

2006 – MX1

1 Stefan Everts	(Yamaha)	
2 ?		
3 ?		

The records

Most world titles: 10

Next best: Joel Robert – six (1964, 1968-1972)

Most consecutive world titles: Six

Next best: Joel Robert – five (1968-1972)

Titles in four classes: (125, 250, 500, MX1)

Next best: Eric Geboers – three (125, 250, 500)

Most GP wins: 100 and counting

Next best: Joel Smets – 57

Most consecutive GP wins: 17

Next best: Mickael Pichon – 12

Most GP moto wins: 170 and counting

Next best: Joel Robert – 101

Most consecutive GP moto wins: 22

Next best: Joel Smets – 14



there are some aspects that I don't want to do anymore. The pressure of not making mistakes for the whole year, to train every day, to make sure you take your vitamins every day, to get your body checked out at the doctors on time, to sleep enough hours, to drink no alcohol, not to party.

"There are so many parties during the summer and I had to say so many times 'no, I have to race Sunday and I have to think on my energy'.

"Many people look from outside and they say it is so easy for Everts for win. But it isn't. I have to work 24/7 to achieve what I have done. I don't just jump on my bike and win and next week do it again. It is my job and to do it properly I have to stay focused.

"And when you pass 30 it's not so easy anymore. Your body needs more time to recover than when you were 20 and you have to work at it to make sure that the weekends are your top days.

"I decided back at the start of last year that I would quit this autumn. I will be 34 in November

and I think I will look back in 12 months time and say that it was one of the smartest decisions that I have made in my career."

DBR: 100...

SE: "It's something I didn't want to think about for so long but once I got to 95 it was something I decided to go for. It's like that hat-trick at Ernee, it's another figure which could be unique. I cannot be so close and not go for it. You can count on one hand the people in any sport who can point to such a figure.

"And I also gave myself the aim to keep on winning both motos. I never clinched any of my first nine titles in Belgium but I knew if I could get 150 points ahead by the end of the day at Namur I could do it at last. I had to depend on Kevin dropping some points but I had to do my part by taking every point and I did it.

"Winning the title in Namur was like a dream come true. Eric Geboers has done it, Joel Smets too and this year's race was also a double celebration for my family – race day was Liam's second birthday!"

DBR: 2007...

SE: "I'll have a lot of pain in my heart but it has to come one day! I have given 18 years of my life to racing GP motocross and it will be hard not to be doing that anymore. But perhaps I will still be around. I am trying to do something with Yamaha, helping out the team and the riders.

"Possibly it is the wrong thing for me, to be around when I am not racing anymore. That is something I need to find out for myself next year. For so many years I have had my life under control and now I face a new step in my life and I don't know how it will turn out. That scares me a bit.

"Maybe I can find something new which I am happy doing but I don't think it will be easy not to be racing anymore. Maybe in a few years time I would think about running a team but I don't want to do that for the moment."

But there is one thing Stefan will always have, namely our thanks for a remarkable career which has brought so many fans so much pleasure!



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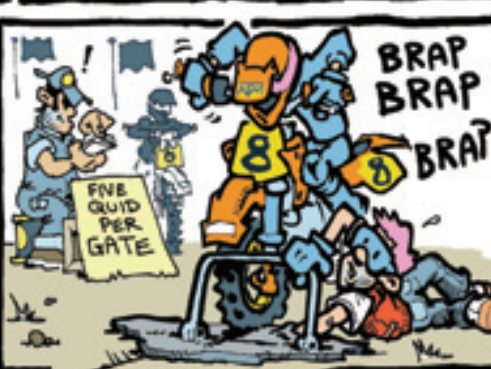
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HARD HAND

THE LADS GET ON IT DURING NAMUR WEEKEND...

139





THE PERFECT WEEK

The season's in full swing and you've got back-to-back race weekends - so what's the best way to prepare during the week?

Words by Alan Milway Photos by Paul Thomas

WHEN YOUR passion is racing bikes you are judged on your moto results and for a pro rider race day is the main event of the week. So having that week planned out perfectly is vital and could make the difference between winning and losing, collecting bonus money and even getting that dream deal for the following season.

For a club rider – or someone who just wants to progress at their local practice track on a Sunday – there's a lot that can be taken from a pro rider's regime. And it can be scaled down to take into account 9-5 work, wife, kids and all the other things that get in the way of riding! This will help you get the most from your efforts and set you up to have more fun, get less fatigued and recover more quickly from a day at the track.

At this point of the year the season is in full swing and often races fall on consecutive weekends. So in the days in between you need to find time to allow recovery from one race

while building/maintaining fitness levels, progressing on the bike and making sure you're fresh for the following weekend's race. That's a lot to ask in six days!

If we look at the requirements of the racing we can then get a clearer picture of the type of exercises and style of training we need to use. If we focus on motocross with races lasting anything from 20-40 minutes it's not a short sprint but a high-intensity push for a relatively prolonged period of time.

Assuming you have been involved in some sort of regular previous training, the main aim during this point in the season is to have sessions that replicate the effort in a race so efforts that verge on 'lactic threshold' are ideal. This is a level that is 'just' sustainable before you reach that level at which there is a rapid build-up of lactic acid and muscles suddenly feel solid, heart rate goes through the roof and you quickly have to back off to

let legs and arms recover.

It equates to about 85-90 per cent of maximum heart rate and the best way to work at this level is to push very hard for five minutes, then back off for five minutes and exercise at a steady level, then go hard again for five minutes. You can work this way with different exercises – on a bicycle, rowing machine, cross trainer, running or swimming. It's a good way to build stamina at the required heart rates. But be aware that this is slightly different to 'sprint intervals' as it is a more sustained effort and a sprint interval would only last for 30 seconds or so of flat-out effort.

This hard effort will help improve fitness during the week but the gains will be hard to achieve if you have not worked hard in the pre-season – the hard hours then will be paying off now! So try and remember this come January when it is cold, wet and going for a run is very low on the 'to do' list.

Top Tips

Stay Fresh

- Recovery is important after the race has finished so warm down, ensure a good intake of carbohydrate/protein and rest.
- Sessions should be short but sweet so hard work and effort pay here. Think of training as race intensity but be careful not to burn out (hence the shorter sessions) and listen to your body – don't train if you are feeling very tired or ill.
- Think of nutrition intake – protein for muscle repair and recovery, carbohydrate to prepare for exercise and racing. Cutting out junk food and processed/pre-packed food will greatly improve health and energy levels.
- There is no substitute for riding so building in a session at the track during the week will make a big difference come the weekend.
- Race day should dawn with you feeling fresh, rested and raring to go. You don't want tired legs from cycling or stiff muscles from weightlifting.
- Try to plan the week in a diary as it helps you stick to training – even if it is only a couple of sessions a week.
- Aim to follow this schedule of training until the end of September – then you can go to the MXdN and be inspired to work hard all winter to move up to that next level!

ask alan

Your questions answered

Next month's MX Medical will answer your questions relating to all aspects of riding including training, nutrition and injuries. So if you've got a question you'd like to ask Alan email him directly with the heading 'DBR Questions' at alan.milway@talk21.com

medical milway

Alan Milway is a qualified sports scientist who runs MX Fitness specialising in training motocross and enduro riders. For more information on how Alan can help you train go to his website www.mxfitness.co.uk or call him on 07810 827427



Milway does his best muppet impression

It is clear at many club events who has been putting in the hours during the week so think of the guys you are racing and what they might be up to – or if they are reading this!

Gym strength work will also help progress and if the cardio work you are doing is mostly lower body this will be ideal in training your upper body to give better control on the bike and help that 'attack' come race time.

Don't underestimate the importance of recovery after racing. If you are feeling stiff, sore or tired the next day, this can be helped greatly by the right cool down, nutrition and exercise on a Monday.

Professional rugby players use as many techniques as possible to aid recovery – from compression tights to aid blood flow back from the muscles and help reduce muscle soreness and stiffness to high protein intake on a Monday for improving muscle repair. Stationary cycling at low intensities will also help recovery and

soothe those tired legs.

All of these techniques transfer to many sports and motocross riders could do a lot worse than look to these to help them feel better and fresh for the week ahead.

Below is a hypothetical training week for this point in the season assuming you'll be racing at each end of the week and that time isn't an issue but race success is. Obviously, it may not be easy to stick to but use the guidelines to set yourself up for the weekend feeling fresh and also in great shape.

Monday

Recovery day after Sunday race – high protein intake, recovery cycle ride or stationary bike at low intensity.

Tuesday

Lactate threshold session – thorough stretching then short but hard session with hard effort.

Wednesday

Morning: Cycle ride at steady level interspersed with a few sprints.

Afternoon: MX practice – race-length motos and skills practice.

Thursday

Gym session with good warm-up and then weights work.

Friday

Steady cycle or rest preparing for the weekend with focus on high carbohydrate food intake.

Remember, this is a generalized training plan and dependant on the time available the sessions may need to be changed. But the general idea is clear – recover, improve, rest and see the hard work come together when you get out on the track and can keep pushing all the way to the flag!



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SHARP SHOOTERS!

Big Red launch their '07 MX and enduro four-strokes in the deep sand of Honda Park in Belgium...

Words by Tony Marshall and Geoff Walker Photos by rayarcher.com

FOR THE '06 Honda launch the sadistic crew thought it would be funny to release the bikes at Lierop the day AFTER the GP which resulted in more than a few broken peaks as the cream(!) of Europe's test hackers played at being MX and enduro gods for the day...

For '07 the people in red provided a slightly more forgiving venue for the launch and opted to use the fantastic facility of Honda Park in Belgium. With a fully-prepped MX track Tony Marshall (middle name Derek) could go off and whip it for the great Ray Archer while Geoffrey

Walker (middle name Gobsh*te) headed into the woods and the extreme sections of the enduro loop on the Xs.

And while he was at it our tech editor had a blast on the new CRF230 aimed at recreational use for riders new to the off-road world.



CRF250X

This little bike drives me crazy – I think it is one of the most fun bikes on the planet to ride. There's nothing like the feeling of being able to take a bike and push it to its absolute limit of performance. Yes, it may not be the fastest out there but the 250X is probably the most fun on the trails when there is no pressure of competition.

The comfort level and rideability of this bike is incredible – it really is an all-round good guy in all departments. The improvements in the engine department are significant as the motor breathes its power with a new found freedom. The cylinder head is reported to a more 'R' spec and the piston and rings are taken straight from the CRF250R. These changes together with the remapped ignition and new accelerator pump in the carb are the keys to the new-found life in the 250X.

I noticed a massive difference in the overall performance of the bike as it would pull and rev harder than previous pretty docile models. The

little bike would do all I asked of it and more and performed without a hitch. The comfort level is top notch and everything felt lighter and more agile as the motor let the bike be used as it should be with no sign of hesitation or major restriction.

It goes without saying with the Honda range on the controls and their feel that everything simply fits with your body positioning and how you would want it to be for long day in the saddle. The controls work easily and with a light feel to the clutch and throttle you'll be saving energy. The clutch basket and centre are beefed up for longevity while the brakes are the same as the R model so they are strong and powerful with an easy feel.

And a new lighter front wheel hub reduces unsprung weight at the front making for a big improvement in handling and turning agility.

The improvements to the 250X are not mind-blowing but they turn an already fun bike into an absolute blast. This bike will get you smiling all the way to, over and beyond the mountains!

Changes to the '07 250X have made it an even better bike



A lighter front hub makes for greater agility



At slow speeds the 250X is an extremely effective weapon

bike test

Throw the 450 into a deep sandy berm and just let the awesome power pull you out...



CRF450

It's a bit of a no-brainer to say that the 450 feels heavier than the 250F and it did take me longer to feel comfortable on it. But Honda have always built a good 450 and it's business as usual for '07.

The riding position on the Honda is class. Once I'd got used to the few extra kilos I was right at home – I didn't even need to move the bars and the foot pegs, rear brake etc just felt right.

Having said that, if I was to race one then the forks would need setting up for me as I couldn't get the front end to steer as I would like. Tyre selection could also be a factor in this but it felt as though it wanted to push under me coming into some of the turns. Across braking bumps it felt good, the problem was just on the approach to the odd fast turn where I was carrying more speed. The 450 does run heavier springs which is usually something that needs changing for me. I did get one of the guys to alter the settings but that didn't really help.

The rear shock tracked really well under load and I had no nasty moments of panic, nor did I have to come off the gas to straighten the bike back

up. Even coming into turns over braking bumps the rear end dealt with them in a manner that can only inspire confidence. There were a couple of jumps where there were hard landings – the sort of jump that just throws you up in the air without much forward movement – but, again, the rear suspension simply soaked it all up.

The power on this thing is just awesome – too much for me nowadays. But it's not silly aggressive, just loads of it with more torque than Paul Malin! It's fun just throwing the 450 into a deep sandy berm, opening it up and sitting there while the power pulls you out with ease. I did find it a bit hard to play ride when I was going slow to line myself up as all this bike wants is to be let loose. There's so much power there.

The mid-range did feel a bit different to the '06 450. It wasn't lacking but when I was coming out of a turn in third I felt it seemed a bit hesitant but I reckon a change of gearing would definitely sort that out. Once I got through the mid-range and into the top-end power it was clear there was more than enough for me – no matter if the track was hardpack or deep sand!

The 450's suspension soaks up everything



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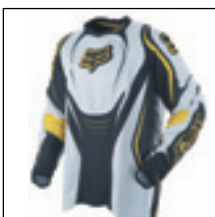
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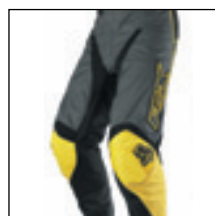
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The 450X may be too much for some but in the right hands it gets the job done



CRF450X

The 450X has been around for a couple of years now and Honda keep making subtle changes to improve the bike from year to year.

I rode the first bikes into the country in '05 and I really enjoyed the 450 and all it had to offer. The amount of power the motor produces is pretty staggering – it could even be classed as being a little too much for a lot of trail riders out there.

This bike is based on the motocross 'R' model and it does enjoy being ridden quickly and smoothly. The grunt comes in with no hesitation with the help of the new accelerator pump in the carb and despite the heavily restrictive exhaust system there really is a lot of power.

I personally really enjoy the type of power the 450X produces as I am a pretty large human but I think the power is manageable as long as you respect the throttle and learn to tickle it in certain situations. For example, an open fire road leading into flowing woods will be a 450X's dream so unleash the beast – but drop into a steep gully and up a technical rocky, rooty climb and you'll have to respect the motor and really use the fantastic low down power.

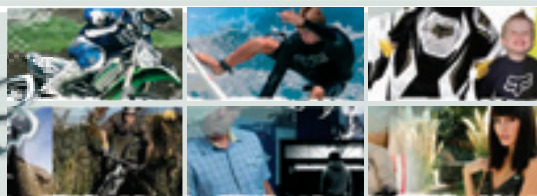
The thing is with all 450 enduro bikes I test they all seem to have the

fire in their belly which can take a little while to tame. This is not a bad thing and, like I say, the 450X has power exactly where you need it in any given conditions. It's a learning curve to find what works best in all situations but that's why we love riding off-road – around every turn is a new challenge.

These challenges are, in true Honda fashion, tackled head on with the 450X as the chassis inspires confidence to use every bit of power on hand. The comfortable riding position is still there and makes for an easy ride on the long days on the trails and the suspension will soak up anything you can throw at it.

The only chassis change I can recommend after my time on the bike is to move the forks through the clamps 5mm to help the bike steer a little faster and stop pushing through the turns. Riding the bike through the Californian desert in stock form it would be perfect but we have a few more twists and turns this side of the pond.

All in all the CRF450X is still a fantastic, solid, comfortable bike and with only a couple of minor changes from '06 – like the accelerator pump, chain guide and one-piece throttle cable cover – it's a slightly better bike compared with this year's machine with all the same overall riding features.



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A major improvement over the '06 250F is the way the '07 model deals with landings without bogging



Honda Park's deep sand provides a tough test for new bikes – the 250F passed with flying colours



CRF250

What can I say about the CRF250? This really is a bike that speaks for itself – just go down to your local track and see how many there are pounding out the laps! Honda really do know how to do things right.

Looking at the '07 250F there are no apparent changes. But appearances are deceiving and once you get out on the track you soon realise that Honda have been busy refining and tweaking what was already a great package.

Honda Park is deep sand which not only gives the bike a thorough workout, it also gives the rider a thorough working over. As the years tick by the bikes get better and better and I get...well, let's just say that life ain't fair!

The first thing that stood out for me with the new 250 compared to this year's machine was how it dealt with landings, especially given the track conditions. When we tested the '06 bike it bogged on landing in the deep sand so I was waiting for more of the same. But it just didn't happen – with the new carb and fuel pump on board there was no hesitation from the motor. With the jetting spot on it felt real sharp and coming out of turns the motor felt more responsive than this year's model.

Bottom and mid-range are a lot sharper than the '06 bike and while it's not necessarily any faster on the top these improvements make for a stronger, easier-to-ride machine.

At speed the front end was very stable and the handling coming into turns over braking bumps was spot on – it didn't move about and I never once found myself fighting with the bike to get it on a line coming into a turn. On some of the slower turns where there was a rut the bike did sometimes want to ride out of it but, to be honest, I was never good with ruts and only really feel comfortable in them on an enduro bike where the front end seems to ride lower.

The rear shock dealt well with the rough sand of Honda Park. There were some parts of the track where they hadn't graded it which was a good test for the bike. On the fast straights the rear end felt like it was stuck in a tram track and even landing off some of the jumps into the bumps, where I stiffened up expecting the rear to kick, the shock just soaked everything up. And coming into braking bumps the shock was just as stable...

For me the CRF250 has been a very well balanced bike right from the word go that seems to suit all standard of rider and for '07 Honda have made it even better.



JEREMY McGRATH

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CRF230F

Fun! Fun! Fun! This little bike is not made for the likes of me but the Honda team let me loose on the baby of the test bunch and I had an absolute blast.

This little warrior is aimed at the 14 to 16-year-old market and lightweight adults. The 230 took all I had to punish it with and even managed to rip me up and over the vertical step they had designed into the enduro lap. The bike nipped in and out of the trees with ease and was easily faster than its biggest brother in the tight going.

Flickability, great fun and ample easy power make the CRF230F a real slice of happiness dressed in red...



CLASH OF THE TITANS!

**The biggest names in world MX go head-to-head
as the Motocross des Nations comes to Britain**

Words and photos by Alex Hodgkinson

RC was unstoppable at the '05 MXdN – can he produce the goods this year? Don't bet against it!



**IN TIMES OF CHANGE..
.. SOME THINGS STAY THE SAME**



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Billy MacKenzie's back on a 450F for Team GB this year

Team Ireland, from left (with beards), Gordon Crockard, Phil McCullough and Martin Barr



ONE MORE week and it's here in the UK! It's the biggest event on the world MX calendar and on September 23/24 the Motocross des Nations comes to Matterley Basin!

For a quarter of a century the motocross world has descended once a year on the MX des Nations to see the GP stars take on the Americans. The Yanks have put up some stellar teams in the past but the anticipation which awaits the arrival of Ricky Carmichael and James Stewart has been felt all over Europe and a massive crowd is expected in the valley to the east of Winchester.

Ricky has only raced once before in Britain as a teenager back in 1998 when his diminutive frame sank in the Foxhill mud of the last Nations held here. But the 26-year-old has been the dominator every Nations he has attended since then, suffering just a single defeat (at the hands of Sebastien Tortelli in Y2K) since the turn of the Millennium.

Stewart's been to Europe before – the 20-year-old raced at Gaildorf in Germany twice as a kid in the world 80s and was beaten by Kevin Strijbos and Tanel Leok – but Matterley will be his first race in the UK and his dramatic style and extraterrestrial bike skills make him

potentially an even greater draw than RC.

With the Nations crossing the North Atlantic for the first time in 20 years next autumn, American interest has never been higher in the 60-year-old classic. New kid on the block Ryan Villopoto will take the MX2 ride after a string of successes during his rookie AMA season. On paper the Americans should win but, with five scores from six to count, upsets are not unknown at the Nations.

So who can pull a shocker?

Belgium have won the Nations more often than anyone else bar America and Britain – they actually have the most victories of all in world team contests if you count the now defunct Trophee des Nations, held until 1984 for teams riding 250s. And they are the only visitors ever to have won on British soil – in 1969, 1980 and 1998!

Their team this year could not be stronger. Stefan Everts leads the way as ever in his final record season and is joined by the Suzuki team of Steve Ramon and Kevin Strijbos. The 2003 125cc world champ Ramon, having put in sterling shows in the MX2 class in recent years, gets promoted to the other big bike slot – and don't forget he was on the podium at the GP in

June – and Strijbos is motivated to slog it out on the smaller bike. Everts has never been off the podium in the Nations and anyone who knows the man will know he won't want to spoil that run in his final official race!

Italy were the last country bar USA and Belgium to win the event but the lack of an MX1 star could cost them dear again. Matterley's June winner David Philippaerts moves to the 450 next year and is strong enough to star but Tony Cairoli, MX2 moto winner at the GP, has first choice – although Tony's previous rides on a 450 have ended up with the Sicilian cartwheeling down the track. The other big bike ride goes to Cristian Beggi, triple MX3 GP winner last month.

France won the Nations for the very first time five years ago and the Tricolor was flown to second place last year but only David Vuillemin of that team is even named for the squad this time. With the Pourcel brothers and Yves Demaria to choose from, they again have a chance of glory however.

The podium looks a step too far for Finland this year with Jussi Vehvilainen, Antti Pyrhonen and Matti Seistola but that was what everyone thought in 1998 and 2002 until the Nordics

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Leading Teams

Great Britain

Billy MacKenzie, Carl Nunn, Tommy Searle (MX2)

Ireland

Gordon Crockard, Phil McCullough, Martin Barr (MX2)

USA

Ricky Carmichael, James Stewart, Ryan Villopoto (MX2)

South Africa

Wyatt Avis, Gareth Swanepoel, Tyla Rattray (MX2)

New Zealand

Josh Coppins, Cody Cooper, Ben Townley (MX2)

Australia

Daniel Reardon, Cheyne Boyd, Brett Metcalfe (MX2)

Belgium

Stefan Everts, Steve Ramon, Kevin Strijbos (MX2)

France

Sebastien Pourcel, Yves Demaria, Christophe Pourcel (MX2)

Italy

Cristian Beggi, David Philippaerts, Tony Cairoli (MX2)

Netherlands

Marc De Reuver, Bas Verhoeven, George Strik (MX2)

Finland

Jussi Vehvilainen, Antti Pyrhonen, Matti Seistola (MX2)

Estonia

Tanel Leok, Jussi Laansoo, Aigar Leok (MX2)

Spain

Jonathan Barragan, Javier Garcia Vico, Carlos Campano (MX2)

Japan

Yoshi Atsuta, Akira Narita, Yohei Kojima (MX2)

Portugal

Hugo Santos, Luis Correia, Rui Goncalves (MX2)



Carl Nunn ditches his 250F from '05 in favour of a 450F



Sebastien Pourcel will step up to a 450F for Matterley Basin



went up to collect their trophy. More fancied is Estonia with the Leok cousins joined by AMA regular Jussi Laansoo while Spain cannot be discounted with Jonathan Barragan, Javier Garcia Vico and Carlos Campano.

Several countries like Holland (with Marc De Reuver) and Denmark (with Brian Jorgensen) simply don't have a team to back up their star and Ireland's first aim has to be to get back into the main programme after being relegated to the B final on Sunday morning last year. Gordon Crockard proved at the GP in June that Matterley suits him and Martin Barr takes the MX2 ride with Phil McCullough making a rare appearance on a 450.

Three countries from the southern hemisphere fancied their chances at the start of the year but each of them are now reduced to biting their fingernails, waiting to see if they

can field their strongest squad.

The Kiwis missed the podium by the narrowest of margins last year and Ben Townley – back in training since mid-August – and Josh Coppins only lost to RC. But another long-term injury to Darryl Hurley means Cody Cooper again completes their team. BT will race his MX2 Pro-Circuit Kwacker in a fascinating confrontation with Villopoto, Pourcel and Searle.

South Africa were genuinely looking at the podium for the first time but Grant Langston is back on the injured list with a broken ankle so it looks like Wyatt Avis will line up with Tyla Rattray and Gareth Swanepoel. Still a good team but not as good as the one Greg Albertyn had hoped to manage.

With Chad Reed's injury Australia have been struggling. Brett Metcalfe was originally touted as an MX1 rider but there was a question mark

hanging over Andrew McFarlane for MX2 as his wife Natalie is expecting their first child this month. The FIM's confirmed entry list names Metcalfe as the MX2 man alongside Cheyne Boyd and Daniel Reardon.

Yoshi Atsuta will also be back to see many old friends as he lines up with Akira Narita and Yohei Kojima for Japan but even the podium is surely too far for the men from the Orient.

And finally there are the Brits! Rob Herring is keeping us waiting for his final trio but all of the squad can potentially run at the front. None can be expected to run with RC under normal circumstances but the Nations is a team event, the British weather will hopefully not but could create havoc in late September and back in 1994 – when Britain won for the first time in 27 years – an amazing team spirit and a trio who rode out of their skins recorded the



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James Stewart will make his UK debut



mxdn preview

The 2005 MXdN saw the USA win from France and Belgium

biggest shock in Nations history.

So what will the Brits do with home support roaring them on? After their top three finishes at Matterley in June, Billy MacKenzie and Tommy Searle are virtual certs for the final line-up while Carl Nunn's recent run of podiums has probably given him the edge over our only MX1 regular James Noble. Searle will obviously take the MX2 ride with the other two on 450s and you have seen what each of them are capable of with your support in the GPs of the last two years.

So get out the flags, pack the spare cans for the air-horns and get down to Matterley in plenty of time to grab the best spots for the Race of the Year. And if you don't get up too early on Sunday morning come September 24 you'll still be part of the show because there is genuinely room for 60,000 around the slopes of Matterley Basin!

So see you there and oh, by the way, it's always going to be the Motocross DES Nations as far as DBR's concerned no matter what the FIM may think!



Teenager Ryan Villopoto fills the MX2 berth for America



Tommy Gun podiumed at the British GP in June so we know he can do the business at Matterley

BORN TO RACE!

His granddad and uncle were both GP racers and his dad's one of the most respected techs in the business so it's hardly surprising that Elliott Banks-Browne's got MX in his blood...

Words and photos by [Alex Hodgkinson](#)



WHEN YOU'RE a British youth champion at 15, your name's Banks and you're from Bury St Edmunds then you're predestined to be a GP motocrosser.

Granddad John was a GP star at 20, uncle Mark joined the ranks at 18 and now Elliott Banks-Browne has quite literally been thrown in at the deep end to face a full GP season.

Silver spoon? In some ways perhaps – after all, how many 16-year-olds get the chance to try their luck on the world stage? A string of DNQs hasn't been the best of beginnings but don't forget Tony Cairoli only made the cut once in two seasons before storming to third in the world.

So is he feeling demoralised? "It was okay at the start of the year. I'd broken my ribs at Hawkstone and that wasn't helping. But halfway through the summer it was starting to get me down because I felt I should have been qualifying by then. I had the speed but I was crashing, I wasn't keeping it going for 20 minutes and two laps on two wheels. Then I hurt my ankle too so I decided it was better to sit out a couple of races to rebuild my confidence in the races at home.

"But I can see how much I have benefited from going to the GPs when I go to the British championships. Racing with the best in the world brings your speed along so much. Just hanging along with them, seeing the different lines they use – and I go all round the track on race day too, watching how they race

and learning from it.

"My British results may not show the benefit in full because I keep getting bad starts at home – I can come from the back through to seventh so if I could get out of the gate with the front men I think I could run with them.

"The fitness thing is hard in the first year out of the youth scene. It's so different to the schoolboys, there I could go into a race having not trained at all and still win every week. But not in the adults.

"I had a trainer at the start of the year but we stopped it after a while and I have trained on my own since. It's difficult to motivate yourself in that situation and I definitely need a new trainer this winter to push me along.

"I go to the gym, do weights, run and cycle but I need to work more on my fitness, then I think the speed will come with that. I feel sure I have the ability but I just have to put it together."

And has the name helped? "Of course the name hasn't hurt me getting into the sport but I haven't noticed any of my generation being jealous about my family background and the chances it has opened up. And I don't think any of the older riders think like that – they don't like being beaten by any youngster.

"There is a little bit of pressure to perform. Everyone looks at you and expects you to do what they did but it's not easy to come in at 16 years of age and actually do it. I just try to put it out of mind as much as I can."

What about having dad Ian Browne running

the day-to-day racing activities on the RWJ team? "Sometimes it's a plus to have my dad there, sometimes it's a negative factor because we argue. But in the long run it's not a disadvantage – he has so much experience and knows what he's talking about. He's right most times and that's the problem because you can't always take it from your dad."

Having someone of your own age to chill out with is cool in such circumstances and the addition of Jake Nicholls to the list of hopefuls in the late season GPs has been a welcome plus. "We've been good friends all the way through schoolboys and we don't live far from each other so we hang out together quite a lot anyway."

So where does it go from here? "At the first GP in Zolder I was like a kid in a sweet shop. 'Wow, I'm here!' Now it seems just like any normal race when I'm there but I don't want to be anywhere else and I definitely want to do GPs again next year.

"I don't think anyone wants to take a step back to riding nationals once they have been to the GPs. It just brings you on so much and gives you a real buzz. I should have qualified at Namur. I really was unlucky there. I was 11th, in a qualifying position, well into the race but a rock came up and hit my hand. It swelled up and I couldn't hold on.

"I know I have the speed and if I'm fitter next year I'm sure I can qualify every week. It's just a matter of doing it!"

Top-10 is no problem in the British but Elliott wants to make his mark in GPs



*Who said two-strokes
are dead? Husqvarna
certainly don't think
they are...*

STROKER GENIUS!

Sure, their four-strokes have all been tweaked and tickled for '07 but the big surprise from the Husqvarna launch is an extensively reworked 125cc screamer...

Words by Tony Marshall Photos by Husqvarna



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The 450 has a more aggressive hit for '07

FOR THE launch of the '07 Husqvarnas we were treated to a return visit to Malpensa, venue for the last handful of Husky tests. I first raced here in 1994 when it was the scene of the opening 125 GP of the season and, to be honest, it hasn't changed much over the years.

This is a good thing when it comes to busy bike launches when time is shorter than me as there's no need to get to know the track lay-out – just fire up a bike, put in a few sighting laps and then let her rip!

Surprisingly, the 125 is the bike the Italian factory have spent most time working on for '07 so the little stroker seemed as good a place as any to get things rolling on. And that suited me anyway as I always try to start with the smaller engined bikes first before working my way up the ccs.

With the vast majority of focus from all the major manufacturers being centred on their four-stroke machines over the last few years, two-stroke development has been fizzling out fast. So the 125 was the last bike I thought they

would be changing. But I think the 125 has been a good seller for the factory over the last few years – even though the future appears to be four-bangers – and this could be the reason why Husqvarna have lavished so much TLC on their eighth-litre machine.

According to the press info Husky have changed the head and cylinder for '07 so I was keen to see how these alterations have affected it. With the '06 125 I always felt like there was something holding it back. The jetting on this year's machine was also too rich when I tested it in '05 but this one sounded sweet when it was kicked into life. And once on the track it was clear the jetting was spot on right through the power range.

It did feel like it could do with a little more bottom-end – it was a bit hesitant coming out of some of the slower turns – but once it got into the mid-range it was not long before the bike was singing on the top-end. And the top-end speed felt good! The '07 125 revs a lot higher than this year's machine and holds it as well –

The heavily reworked 125 impressed Tony



the '06 bike just didn't want to rev and when you did get to the top of the revs it would drop off.

I definitely found myself getting a better response – the harder I rode this bike the better feel I got out of the turns. This is not a short-shift motor – it was best to hold a gear that little bit longer, just how I like to ride a 125!

The front forks were too soft on the top part of the stroke and I found the bike was working too far down the stroke so coming into the take-off on jumps it felt like it was bottoming but, saying that, the forks did soak up big landings with few problems. So I think the spring rate was right and all it needs is some time spent on the valving.

Coming into the braking bumps the forks just wanted to push away from me. I stiffened the forks up which did make them better but I'm sure with more time I could get them set up for my riding style so this wouldn't be a problem.

With Husky not making many changes to their four-strokes for '06 I was pleasantly surprised when I got on their 2007 250cc



Husqvarna's 250 four-stroke is still user-friendly...

...but now it revs more and has a slicker gearbox



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The 510's a real man's bike – great on the straights but hard work in the corners

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thumper. This year's model is a really easy bike to ride and kind to the rider and for '07 they retain that feel but the motor is definitely different. It revs more and the revs don't drop off either. Husky have worked on the black box re-mapping as the bike has been held back too much this year and the changes have been for the better.

The front forks on the 250 felt hard on the top part of the stroke so coming into the turns it felt a bit sketchy – this caught me out a few times and forced me to dab my leg to keep everything stable and that's something I need to avoid nowadays with my right knee problems. I did have a play with the clickers but wasn't able to improve things.

The rear shock was spot on coming into the turns and on all landings – no problems at any time – and the brakes were brilliant with no fade and a great feel. In fact, exactly what you'd expect from Brembo.

The gearbox on the '07 seems so much

better than on this year's machine. There was no point where I missed gears or, as was the case with the '06 bike, found it hard to find gears.

I do like the riding position on this bike. I felt very comfortable in turns and looking at their test riders – who are all pretty much my height – I can see why the 250F suited me.

On to the 450F and I've got to say that next year's bike doesn't feel too different to this year's model other than in the motor department which felt a bit more aggressive and not quite as smooth as the '06. Depending on the track conditions this can be either a plus or a minus – personally I prefer a smooth power delivery to an aggressive one unless I'm racing on a deep sand track where the extra hit of the '07 machine would be an advantage when it came to powering out of turns.

The jetting is set up better than on the '06 model which did make it feel a bit sharper on the bottom and generally just made it

more responsive.

This bike does feel heavier than the rest of the 450s out there, especially when I was coming into turns but it certainly felt stable once I was actually turning. Rear suspension was fine but the front forks did feel a bit on the harsh side. I do feel the footpegs on the Huskies are a bit higher than on Japanese bikes – not that this is a problem, in fact, it's probably a plus for me.

I also turned a few laps on the 510 but given my size I've got to say that while it's definitely not a bad bike it's really not suited to me. It feels so much heavier than the 450 – it's a real man's bike.

I found it very hard getting it into sharp corners as with the big motor it just wants to run on and I kept missing my turning point. It was fun getting the bike on the straights and feeling the power but straights are followed by corners and when I reached them the fun stopped and the hard work began.



CR125

Capacity: 124.82cc
Bore and stroke: 54mm x 54.5mm
Transmission: Six-speed
Carburettor: Mikuni TMX38
Front suspension: Marzocchi USD 45mm (300mm travel)
Rear suspension: Ohlins (325mm travel)
Front brake: 260mm disc
Rear brake: 240mm disc
Wheelbase: 1460mm
Seat height: 990mm
Dry weight: 94.8kg



TC250

Capacity: 249.5cc
Bore and stroke: 76mm x 55mm
Transmission: Five-speed
Carburettor: Keihin FCR-MX37
Front suspension: Marzocchi USD 45mm (300mm travel)
Rear suspension: Ohlins (325mm travel)
Front brake: 260mm disc
Rear brake: 240mm disc
Wheelbase: 1485mm
Seat height: 970mm
Dry weight: 101.2kg



TC450

Capacity: 449cc
Bore and stroke: 97mm x 60.76mm
Transmission: Five-speed
Carburettor: Keihin FCR-MX41
Front suspension: Marzocchi USD 50mm (300mm travel)
Rear suspension: Ohlins (325mm travel)
Front brake: 260mm disc
Rear brake: 240mm disc
Wheelbase: 1472mm
Seat height: 980mm
Dry weight: 106.5kg



TC510

Capacity: 501cc
Bore and stroke: 97mm x 67.8mm
Transmission: Five-speed
Carburettor: Keihin MX41
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Front brake: 260mm disc
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NEIL HUDSON (MAICO) SPARKED THE
BRITISH SURGE TO SECOND PLACE IN THE
1979 MX DES.



FIRST TIMER!

We all have to start somewhere and Jack's first taste of the MXdN came all the way back in 1979 at Ruskeasanta in Finland

Words and photos by Jack Burnicle

ONCE UPON a time there were two world team motocross competitions every year. They ran one week apart with the Trophee des Nations on 250cc machines and the Motocross des Nations on 500s. Some years the 500s came first, other times the 250s.

I'd been to a couple of Trophee des Nations, my first at Dodington Park, near Bristol, in 1973 and my first foreign one – a compelling drama at Kester in Belgium – in 1978.

So my inaugural MX des took me to Finland in September 1979 where our newly-crowned 500cc world champion – Honda's first – would lead into battle a four-man squad managed by current FIM race director Dave Nicoll.

But Graham Noyce's first official weekend as world champ didn't go according to plan. He got beaten. By me!

We all travelled to Helsinki on the majestic Finnjet ferry from Hamburg in Northern Germany. On any 24-hour trip involving idle motocrossers mayhem will inevitably ensue.

Saunas are an obvious target for irreverent Euros from sunnier climes. There we were, Anglo-Saxons enjoying this tropical onboard experience. Suddenly, the door burst open to reveal yelling Frenchmen Jean-Jacques Bruno, Daniel Terroitin and Coco Gomez armed with a hosepipe! They gleefully drenched us with jets of ice-cold water then fled, shrieking with

mop-haired mirth like a bunch of Beatles.

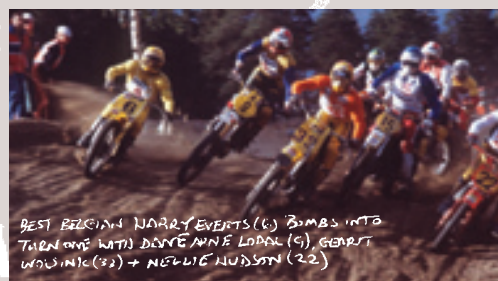
Everybody ate too much because there was a huge, unlimited buffet laid on. But at least Finnjet was spared Noyce's traditional trademark demolition of the restaurant, featuring flying food and splattered walls (an adolescent pastime also favoured, incidentally, by his contemporary – and Dutch rival in Finland – Kees van der Ven, currently grown-up manager of Champ KTM's MX2 squad!).

Later, a table tennis tournament emerged from the turmoil of the games room. This escalated into a tense affair because world class sportsmen – no matter how inept at another game – hate to lose and do so very badly.

Each round comprised only a single gritty game and somehow, despite my limited skills and flatly defensive technique, I made it through to the final. Against Graham.

And there, in one of the most enthralling moments of my mercurial sporting career, I won an engagingly incompetent cliffhanger 21-19. I can still vividly recall that dizzying outburst of applause, the malevolent, disbelieving eyes of ACU bigwig Ken Lywood (who knew, quite rightly, that he'd have thrashed me!) and the certain knowledge that, after a cursory handshake, Noyce wouldn't speak to me for a week.

That MX des took place round the regular Finnish 500 GP



BEST BELGIAN NAUTY EVENTS (6) BOMBS INTO TURNING WITH DUNE NINE LOCAL (5) GEARST WOLINIC (22) + NEILIE HUDSON (22)

was armed with his mum's Kodak Brownie camera. After art college he mixed life as a graphic designer, magazine art director, photographer and part-time art college tutor with motocross and photo-journalism. Now he's a commentator, painting pictures with words. He never did get a proper job...

JACK BURNICLE is the godfather (our words, not his) of British MX Journalism. Born in Billingham, County Durham, to Bella and nutty (his words, not ours) musical genius Stan Burnicle, Jack was mad about cars and motor racing as a kid. At sweet 16 he got a motorbike, rode it to a local 'scramble' and was instantly, hopelessly hooked. Next time he went he

Jack Burnicle

Usual signature of bearer

Signature of holder

Usual signature of wife

DESCRIPTION	SIGNALEMENT
Beater	Titulaire
Occupation	★Wife
Profession	Femme
Place of birth	9/3/47
Lieu de naissance	
Date of birth	



burnicle's beat

VAUGHAN SEMMENS
SKYTIES THROUGH
THE SAND ON HIS
'DOUG' WINDBOLT MAICO



A POWERFUL DRIVE THROUGH
THE PAUK BY ROB HOOPER
(MAICO) SEALED SECOND FOR
BRITAIN BEHIND THE BELGIANS

track, a rugged, scarily fast sand bowl at Ruskeasanta, outside the Finnish capital of Helsinki. There Noyce led a trio of Maicos ridden by 250 GP regulars. Neil Hudson, who had finished runner-up in the 250 world championship to Hakan Carlqvist (Husqvarna), was joined by Midlanders Vaughan Semmens and Rob Hooper, all of them on the open class German machines.

I blew my incognito stay at the team hotel by catching my clogs on a step and crashing heavily down the main staircase into an astonished foyer full of punters. Fortunately, I arose bashful, bruised but intact which was more than could be said for a luckless Ivan van den Broeck. The fourth, Maico-mounted member of pre-race favourites Belgium broke his leg cartwheeling across one of the spectacularly rapid, rutted jumps along the edge of Ruskeasanta's precipitous amphitheatre, rimmed by a thick woodland of fir trees and, on race day, a vast crowd of Finnish fans.

Only the best six scores out of eight counted over two 45-minute motos so the pressure was on the remaining Belgians. But what a trio! Five-time world champion Roger de Coster (Suzuki), Honda new boy Andre Malherbe and newly-crowned 125 world champ Harry Everts, the latter desperate to prove to Suzuki that he was mustard on a 500!

Their individual opposition looked awesome. Other world champions like Hakan Carlqvist and Hakan Andersson (Sweden) and Gennady Moiseev, the latter spearheading the USSR as reigning team champions. Then there were

world vice-champions like van der Ven and Gerrit Wolsink (Holland), Torleif Hansen (Sweden), Hudson and Moiseev's Russian playmate Vladimir Kavinov as well as '70s favourites including Herbert Schmitz, Hans Maisch and Fritz Kobele of West Germany, Arne Lindfors of Sweden, Dane Arne Lodol and rising Dutch star Gerard Rond.

But, vitally, the home team didn't feature their recently retired four-time world champion Heikki Mikkola who had packed in after losing his crown to Noyce in Namur. And, sadly, the Finns failed to make the cut during Saturday's qualifying races although they at least thrilled the crowd by winning Sunday's 'B' final from Norway and those traditional sand-haters, France!

In contrast, sand-loving Gerard Rond — a rookie 500 GP rider with Suzuki in 1979 — holedshot the first moto. Everts, de Coster and semi-retired Swede Torleif Hansen formed a Suzuki 1-2-3-4 ahead of 250 world champion Carlqvist on an outgunned Husqvarna so already Belgium and Sweden looked strong.

While 'Rondo' narrowly led a taut encounter, Hudson and Noyce completed lap one eighth and ninth with Semmens and Hooper mired in 19th and 22nd positions. Already Moiseev had crashed, fetching down van der Ven and German team leader Herbie Schmitz.

Noyce muscled past duelling duo de Coster and Hudson but Hooper charged into the pits at the end of lap four, his front wheel collapsing. Dad Bob, briefly extinguishing his fat cigar, leapt into action and Robert rejoined a lap down. ►



5 TIMES WORLD CHAMP ROGER DE COSTER
(SUZUKI) LED BELGIUM TO VICTORY
ALONGSIDE HARRY EVERTS.

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'ROLLS' NOYCE, REIGNING 500 WORLD CHAMP, GRABS HUGE AIRTIME DURING HIS AMAZING FIRST-RACE RIDE

HAKAN CARLQVIST (HUSKY13) DIVES PAST NEIL HUDSON (MAICO, 22.) INTO THE FINAL LAP OF RACE 2!

Little Harry Everts, riding hard, closed on Rond as Noyce – obviously driven on by his demoralising defeat at table tennis – stretched past 'Carla' at the halfway stage and targeted Honda team-mate Malherbe.

Hudson hung gamely on to de Coster's works Suzuki while a valiant Vaughan Semmens moved up to 14th ahead of Andersson and Kavinov but simply lacked the sheer speed of Fritz Kobele's and Hans Maisch's factory Maicos down the long main straight.

The first six places closed up dramatically as Noyce pulled along his pursuers but were suddenly depleted when Carla's Husky threw its chain. Everts outwitted Rond and momentarily hit the front but as the Dutchman responded emphatically Noyce suddenly arrived on the scene, surprised Harry and snatched second.

Scorching sideways into his final lap over the brow of the bowed main straight, Graham closed right up on Rondo until, within sight of the flag, a minor spill left him just four seconds adrift – a rueful second (again!).

Everts led home team-mates de Coster and Malherbe – the three Belgians already in an imperious position – with a resilient Hudson sixth ahead of Lindfors, Arne Lodal, Herbie Schmitz and Russian Valery Korneev. Our third scorer, Semmens, appeared to be lapped on the finishing line but was frantically waved on by race officials, only to cruelly run out of petrol a hundred yards short of completing that needless extra lap.

The dour Brummie heaved his Doug Wheeler Maico uphill through deep, sapping sand – an unlikely hero urged on by the loudest cheers of the day – before collapsing,

understandably exhausted, beneath his bike and a mocking chequered flag.

Vaughan's strength and courage meant Great Britain were lying second, 10 points behind Belgium but another 10 in front of Holland for whom Gerrit Wolsink had recovered manfully back to 11th after an early crash. West Germany lay fourth, just two points adrift of the Netherlands.

The paddock buzzed during the break and nowhere was more hectic than the British pits where welding was required on Semmens' frame and a cracked swinging arm had to be replaced on Hooper's Maico.

Tension ran high as the squad lined up for race two. Rond once more gated with a flourish ahead of team-mate Wolsink, Kobele, Everts and Noyce. Graham typically attacked instantly and pushed through to second but as he lined up Rondo the 500cc world champ's outstretched left leg struck a boulder embedded in the Finnish sand and by lap five the dashing blond Hampshireman, in terrible pain, had pulled out.

This huge British blow left Holland in an apparently unassailable Suzuki one-two with Rond leading 500cc world title runner-up Wolsink and clear of Everts, Hudson, Malherbe, de Coster, Carlqvist and Torleif Hansen. Semmens lay 15th but a fall in the first turn after 13 minutes cost him three precious places. Hooper – immersed in a swirling midfield battle with Schmitz, Kavinov, Kobele and Moiseev – responded magnificently, cutting inside Moiseev and the famously obstructive 'Fiery Fritz' Kobele before hurling his Maico high past Kavinov's KTM into ninth place at half-distance.

Hansen and Kees van der Ven had both

been forced out with shattered rear wheels before a rear tyre puncture finally dented Belgium's inexorable march to victory and forced Malherbe downfield. But the suave 'Dede' coolly survived some lurid slides to bring his Honda home a determined 13th behind Valery Korneev and his disappointing team boss Moiseev.

By the halfway stage sand worshipper Wolsink (winner of Hawkstone Park's 500 GP in 1975!) had surged past Rond into the lead and the first six places looked settled. But never discount Hakan Carlqvist!

On his agricultural open class Husky, whooped on by the Finnish crowd as a weekend homeboy, Carla soared past both 'Nellie' Hudson and Harry Everts on a flying final lap and, as poor Rondo's Suzuki suddenly ran dry 200 yards from home, inherited a sensational second behind Wolsink!

This also helped Rob Hooper into a superb seventh spot which, combined with another classy ride by Hudson and Semmens hanging gutsily on to 18th place behind Arne Lindfors, consolidated a heroic, heart-wrenching second place for Great Britain ahead of West Germany, defending champions the USSR, Holland and Sweden!

My how the drinks flowed during the trophy presentation in a vast beer marquee that night under the frostily disapproving glare of Ken (P)Lywood!

Next day our hangovers headed off on the long, picturesque ferry crossing that weaved its way through islands and fjords to Sweden and the following weekend's Trophee des Nations at Barkarby, just outside Stockholm.

Er, table tennis anyone?



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Steve Cox is an American moto-journalist who follows the entire AMA SX/MX tour. Since moving on from famed US weekly Cycle News he's struck out on his own to do the freelance thing and most recently launched a new bi-weekly MX magazine – Motocross Illustrated – covering both AMA and GP action. He knows the sport and its personalities like few others and as our US Editor provides insight and features straight from the Stateside scene...



BAPTISM OF FIRE!

GP winner Tyla Rattray's never made any secret of his US ambitions and recently had his first taste of AMA action – which ended before it really began...

WORDS by Steve Cox PHOTOS by Suttly



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Tyla Rattray has made no secret about his plan to eventually move to the US. Of course, he says he wants to win a world championship before he goes but that's not necessarily a prerequisite.

He showed up for the Millville AMA National to strut his stuff among the AMA speedsters and although his practice times were in the top three both times his bike didn't break in the other two practices his bike did break. The last time it broke in the whoops, sending him onto his shoulder and dislocating it.

DBR: What happened?

TR: "Second practice today I was going through the whoops, something broke in the engine, the engine stopped and sent me flying over the handlebars and the bike nailed me in the back. Also, I put my hands down before I landed and my arm bent too far back and I dislocated my shoulder.

"I also broke an engine yesterday in practice and they tried the same thing again for the next day so it was really stupid. But there's nothing else I can say. I was really looking forward to racing. Racing with the American guys would've been cool and good fun."

DBR: Are you going to be all right for the next GP?

TR: "I should be. I mean, it was dislocated before so if I work it, it should be okay but after the season I'll probably have an operation. I think I'll race des Nations and maybe do a few Euro supercross rounds and then have the operation. Do like Bercy and some other ones so if I come over in 2008 I can be more ready for it.

"I want to maybe do some supercrosses at the end of

the year and get the feeling of it and then hopefully the following year [2008] I can come over to America. I think the first year I just want to race outdoors and then the second year go supercross racing too."

DBR: You said you wanted to win a world championship before you come over. What if you don't?

TR: "Yeah, I want to. I think actually if I win the world championship I'll come. If I don't win it I think I'll come anyway. I really enjoy it here. Next year will be my seventh year in Europe so it's time to come over here and see if I can do anything in America."

DBR: Obviously, your times were right in there in practice so you're at least close to the right speed.

TR: "Yeah, it's a really nice track with really good jumps. In Europe we don't have good jumps like they have here. Nice floating jumps and whatnot. I really enjoyed it here. I had a lot of fun but I just wish I could be racing."

DBR: So who is going to be on your team for the MXdN? Langston's hurt and you're sort of hurt now too...

TR: "It's me, Wyatt Avis and Gareth Swanepoel. They're all in Europe now already. We just have to wait and see."

DBR: Where do you think your team's going to finish?

TR: "I think a top-10 we'll be happy with. I'll be on the 250F and I hope those guys will do well on their 450s."

DBR: Is your KTM contract for two more years or just the one?

TR: "No, it's just next year in Europe."

© Steve Cox



Styla's US debut ended early with a dislocated shoulder



DBR: So it's not even guaranteed that when you come over here you'll still be racing for KTM...

TR: "That's definitely true. I don't know what team I'll be coming over to ride for. I haven't spoken to any teams but I know some teams are interested but I haven't spoken about a deal yet."

DBR: Although you haven't had a chance to actually race here yet, what can you tell by what you've seen in regard to the difference between the US series and the GPs?

TR: "The guys here just look very fast on the track. In Europe there's a lot of bad technique. Here it's more like wide open and go as fast as you can. That's the difference I see comparing this here to Europe. Also, I like riding tracks like this where you can hang it out a little bit. In Europe some of the tracks are too technical and tight and some have like a rock surface and it's just ***t to ride on."

DBR: If you move here, where will you base yourself?

TR: "I think I'd like to just stay in Florida. I'd like to stay there and do some riding there and maybe catch up with Ben Townley. I don't know, maybe do some training with him also. We'll just have to see. But I definitely want to come. I've been here once now and I really enjoy it so it's going to be something new for me to look forward to."

DBR: What do you think has kept you from winning the world title by now?

TR: "This year I twisted my ankle at like the eighth round of the world championship in Italy and it's been pretty difficult to come back from that. My ankle was black. It wasn't even blue, it was black, swollen and bruised. It's taken quite a while to get 100 per cent because I didn't just damage one ligament, I damaged three. It was difficult to get it back. I think this weekend was the first time it felt normal again. It was the first time I felt normal with my ankle then this **** happens."

DBR: But what do you do?

TR: "There's nothing you can do. What's done is done so all I can do now is just go back to Europe, try and win the last few GPs, do a few supercrosses, then have surgery on my shoulder and get it fixed."





In his final full season of competition Ricky Carmichael has dominated outdoors

KING RICKY!

RC takes his 10th outdoor crown with five motos still to run

WORDS and PHOTOS by Steve Cox

It seems the naysayers always have a prediction to make – and it seems when they're making these predictions about Ricky Carmichael they're always wrong. "He's too short to make it on big bikes." "Sure, he can win on a 250 but he won't be able to race a 450 like that." "Just wait until James Stewart moves up to the 250 class." "Just wait until James Stewart has a 450 like Carmichael does."

Since his first full pro season in 1997, Ricky Carmichael has never lost an AMA Outdoor National Championship and since his move up from 125s he has recorded three unbeaten seasons – two of which he didn't lose a single moto – and he's not been beaten by anyone at the Motocross des Nations.

At least one of those streaks continues in 2006 as in Carmichael's last full season he's clinched his 10th outdoor title in 10 tries and his 15th AMA national title (including five SX crowns).

At Millville, round nine of the 12-round series, Carmichael fights off a game Chad Reed in moto one before the rain hits in moto two. Carmichael seemingly realizes his opportunity to further his legend and goes about lapping the entire field in the mud. He passes David Vuillemin – in second place – on the last lap.

"I didn't think I could lap the whole field," Carmichael says. "I had some motivation for it, for sure. I was wondering where everybody was because I'd seen everybody and I'd passed pretty much everybody and it

was funny because the only people I didn't remember seeing were Windham, Millsaps and Cobra [Vuillemin].

"When I got up to Cobra I was like 'the only other two guys that can be in front of me are Millsaps and K-Dub'. But it's not like I went out there and wanted to do that. I wanted to get the holeshot because I knew that was going to be key and I just kind of wanted to redeem myself from the last mud race."

Vuillemin finishes second overall on his privateer MotoworldRacing.com Yamaha. "I got to second and then I crashed and I had a big lead on third but then I lost almost a minute," Vuillemin says. "But it was a great race and it's great for me to be on the podium today. It's not a normal condition but it's still a good result for me."



KEVIN WINDHAM

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James Stewart's the only man who can even live with RC's pace outdoors



The Cobra strikes at Millville



The 450s blast off at Binghamton

SERIES STANDINGS

450F class

1	Ricky Carmichael	539 points
2	Kevin Windham	371
3	Davi Millsaps	358
4	Chad Reed	333
5	James Stewart	331
6	Travis Preston	296
7	David Vuillemin	290
8	Nicholas Wey	272
9	Timmy Ferry	247
10	Josh Summey	155



More mud is to follow at round 10 as a huge rainstorm hits Binghamton, New York, the day before the race. On race day, the track is slick and one-lined – not that it matters to Carmichael.

RC dominates moto one and with the win (and Chad Reed's absence after hurting his shoulder at Millville) clinches the championship with five motos left to run. He says the championship doesn't make him think about continuing to race full-time.

"The way I look at it, obviously, if I keep racing I'm going to get beat," Carmichael says. "That's just the same with everybody. You have to know when your time is, you can't be greedy and I'm happy with what I accomplished. It's just time. I have some other opportunities and other challenges and I'm looking forward to racing and just have fun and help Suzuki and still be competitive when I do race.

"I'm glad that I could go out on top because if I didn't I would probably be saying 'hey, I think I can do it again' and then you just get into a vicious cycle. So I think my decision is good and I'm happy with it and that's all that matters."

Moto two sees Carmichael out front again but an

early fall hands the lead to James Stewart. Undaunted, Carmichael chases Stewart down and passes him to take the moto win and the overall.

"He was riding strong all weekend and when I came by he was just getting up and turning himself around so I knew he wasn't that far behind," Stewart says. "I knew I just had to keep focused on what I needed to do and try my best."

But Stewart's best just isn't good enough! "I slowly caught up to James," RC says. "He was riding good and when I got behind him it felt like he picked it up and it was really tough to pass so I was just kind of waiting to map out where I could pass him, if I could at all. It just seemed like there were lines on the straightaways and it all funneled down into a thick blob of mud.

"I started to set him up in the mechanics' turn down there, going inside and outside and I ended up getting him around the outside. It was really fun to race him. We always race clean and it reminds me of racing with Kevin or the McGrath days. It's nice. I think he'll tell you that it's fun when you don't have to look over your shoulder."

Yet more mud follows the series to Steel City for round 11 and, yet again, it's Carmichael dominating moto

one. Then in moto two it's Stewart's turn to lead early and then fall but after that there's no catching Carmichael out front.

"I just lost the front," Stewart says. "I kind of got kicked in the back and lost the front. There was nothing I could do. I was on the ground before I knew it. I was happy about my start the second moto. I was riding hard and I was like 'man, he's still catching me'. Mike Fisher [Team Kawasaki manager] came to tell me at the end of the race that he was catching me like two seconds on this downhill right there. It was okay. I thought I rode pretty good today and I felt strong."

But the win and the overall go to RC and 10 years after his start, somehow he's still finding ways to win.

"Well, you know obviously there's no secrets,"

Carmichael says. "Everyone thinks that I just train and ride and train and ride and I do train and ride but at the same time we've got a programme and basically that's it. If you don't know where you're going, you might end up somewhere else. We know where we're going and we just try to capitalize on things and try to have as little weakness as possible. I think that's where I've shined. I just don't have too many weaknesses."





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ADVANTAGE VILLOPOTO

Ryan pulls clear as Mikey gets mired

Mike Alessi is playing the points game for the 250F championship. After dominating round one with a 1-1 score he has yet to win another overall. His championship rival, Ryan Villopoto, has won five. Heading into Millville, Alessi sits on top with three points in hand over Villopoto. After moto one, though, Villopoto sees himself back in the points lead for his second-place finish against Alessi's fourth.

However, the great equalizer is mud. In moto two, Alessi grabs third while Villopoto can only manage a seventh after having to stop and get his front-brake line cut. The advantage returns to Alessi and he takes a five-point lead into round 10.

"I just want to say congratulations to Carmichael, Bubba and Ryan Villopoto for being picked for the Motocross des Nations," Alessi says. "I hope they go there and win. I think Ryan might need to brush up a little bit on his mud-riding skills because, like Ricky said, it could rain in England and he might need to do a little brush-up there."

Villopoto doesn't think so. "S**t, doesn't he realize they picked me and not him?" Villopoto asks. "I don't know. He got lucky again."

But it's Hepler with the surprise win as the Makita Suzuki rider – who began racing again this year at Budds Creek – grabs the overall via a 3-1 score.

"My speed's been really picking up and I'm just going for pride, not points," Hepler says. "I can hang it out and take some chances that some of these other guys don't

want to because they can't afford going down."

At the start of moto one in Binghamton, Alessi ends up with his foot on the throat of the series as Villopoto, Andrew Short and many others go down in the first turn as Alessi grabs the holeshot. Inexplicably, though, Alessi flies off the track in turn two and goes down, then launches his bike into traffic as he attempts to remount. As it turns out, his bike is too damaged to continue and he drops out of the moto.

All eyes are on Villopoto as he works his way through the pack, eventually grabbing fourth place at moto's end behind race-winner Hepler, Yamaha rookie Josh Hill and Pro Circuit's Troy Adams.

"I lined up on the very inside gate and tried to get the very best start that I could and I only seen Mike just a little bit out in front," says Villopoto. "I came into the first turn, got rear-ended by the whole pack and it put me down on the ground and a whole bunch of other people."

"I had to work my way up and as soon as I came over the single there he is laying on the ground. I just went past him and the next lap I came around and I seen on my pitboard that he was out so I was kind of glad that I didn't have to worry about him."

Moto two is all Villopoto as he grabs the lead early and checks out in front of Short and Hepler. Alessi finishes fourth so Villopoto re-assumes the points lead by some 20 points with two races left to run.

"Yeah, you know, I heard I need to brush up on my mud skills but I think I was doing all right yesterday," Villopoto says. "It was starting to rain and the track was really slippery and it worked out for me. I guess I'll just have to go over there and deal with whatever happens,

rain or shine [at the MXdNJ]."

The overall goes to Hepler again. "It's good," Hepler says. "I wasn't here for the first few races and now it seems I'm starting to get on a little roll. These guys smoked me pretty bad there in the second moto but that's the way it goes sometimes. The first moto was good. I got good starts all weekend so that makes it a lot easier. Usually I'm a come-from-behind guy and once in a while I tighten up when I start out front."

Steel City is Hepler's home track and given his recent runs he's a favourite to win again. He grabs the holeshot in moto one and checks out. Josh Grant finishes second just in front of Villopoto who suffers a poor start. Alessi struggles to sixth.

Moto two sees Hepler out front again but this time speedy Villopoto is on his tail. However, Hepler isn't to be denied and he fights Villopoto off and eventually pulls away for his third overall win in the last three races.

"It's been a few months that I've been racing now and I think I'm just getting back to my old self," Hepler says. "I knew when I first came back at Budds Creek that I wasn't ready to win but I knew I could run up front. I think now I just feel strong like I used to."

And Villopoto now sports a 29-point lead heading into the final round meaning a second-place finish in moto one clinches it, as do top-10 finishes in both motos, regardless of what Alessi does.

"I'm going to go into next week and have the first moto hopefully go solid and not end up like Ivan last year," Villopoto says. "I just want to gain a little more points the first moto so the second moto I can just go to race the race and not race for the championship."

SERIES STANDINGS

250F class

1	Ryan Villopoto	433 points
2	Mike Alessi	404
3	Andrew Short	359
4	Joshua Grant	339
5	Brett Metcalfe	303
6	Broc Hepler	273
7	Andrew McFarlane	269
8	Troy Adams	191
9	Matt Goerke	190
10	Nathan Ramsey	179



Alessi feels the pressure



Binghamton



Since his return from injury Broc Hepler's been the fastest man out there

Villopoto's got a 29-point lead going into the final round





TO HELL AND BACK!

Team DBR take on the Red Bull Romaniacs – the world's toughest enduro – and just about live to tell the tale...

Words and photos by Team DBR/No Fear

THE RED Bull Romaniacs is one of the world's most extreme enduro races. So extreme in fact that the insurance company of the publishing group I work for deemed it way too dangerous for me to attend and race as an employee of the magazine.

With plans pretty much set in stone and with no way of backing out there was only one thing to do – book some holiday, load the van and do it all as a freelancer! So here it is, the first non-DBR magazine work I've done in almost four years. So excuse me if I waffle on more than normal as this time I'm being paid per word!

Like I already said (gotta get that word count up), the Romaniacs is one of the world's most extreme enduro races and it's not just the event itself which is a test of man and machine – the start is in Bucharest some 2,000 miles from the DBR office so even getting there is a challenge.

To experience the race first hand takes a lot of time spent planning and stressing. In this case it also took a lot of help from my friends and a lot of help from my friends' friends. But like pretty much everything I do I didn't have much time to plan or stress.

After an initial look at competing as a two-man team with Tech Ed Geoff Walker some six months ago the budget to reach Romania just couldn't be found. But when the organisers of the race offered Team DBR a free entry just two weeks before the start things were suddenly looking much more doable.

First thing to do was call Geoff and see if he was still up for the ruck – which he was – and then contact Shaun Sisterson at KTM UK to see if he was still up for supplying a pair of bikes for our adventure. Being a good old boy Shaun pointed up a 2007 model 250 EXC two-stroke for myself while Godfrey scored the hottest new enduro weapon in the orange army's

armoury – the 250 EXC-F.

With the best bikes for the job all sorted we just needed to work on buying and blagging the best aftermarket bits available – Michelin tyres and mousses, 2C Wheels, DEP pipes, Cycra handguards, Twin Air filters, Apico Tri-Metal sprockets, KTM Racing sumpguards – for Geoff to fit onto the bikes to doubly make sure they'd be up to the task of reaching the finish in Sibiu.

As well as prepping the bikes to perfection Geoff also wrote a little note of encouragement on the tank of each bike. He obviously thought he was gonna be riding the two-stroke as it said 'keep going fat boy' on that and only 'keep going' on the four-popper – what a fool!

Anyhoo, with bikes prepped, spares sorted and kit cleaned and ready it was just a matter of shoe-horning everything in the van and heading to Romania. Like all well planned road trips nothing much happened on the drive out. The half and three days of driving from Morecambe to Marshfield, Marshfield to Frankfurt (Germany), Frankfurt to Arad (Romania) and Arad to Bucharest (ditto) went without incident.

After passing through France, Belgium and the Netherlands my highlight of day one had to be the first toilet stop in Germany where I was introduced to the self-cleansing toilet seat. The Germans know it's impressive so you have to spend 50 Cents to see it for yourself but to be fair it's among the best half Euros I've ever spent!

As we left Germany, passed through Austria and then entered Hungary it soon became apparent that the further east we

travelled the crappier the roads became and the more dangerous the drivers got. Being passed by Beemers pushing one-forty on the autobahn isn't so bad but avoiding head-ons with Dacia-driving dumbasses wears a little thin when you have to dodge them as frequently as the potholes in the road.

Romania is a country of vast contrast. You see the rich and the poor, the most magnificent buildings next to the slummiest of slums, the sexiest women alongside the ugliest blokes and some of the most gorgeous countryside littered with vast amounts of unsightly rubbish.

But it's easy to overlook all the downsides of a country when it's still possible to buy a pair of perfect 12 inch pizzas, two beers and a couple of cokes for the equivalent of six quid while lovingly leeching at the oh-so lovely local ladies. And then there's the riding. Romania – and in particular the Carpathian mountain range – has some of the best and most accessible off-road riding in t'world which is why Austrian snowboard legend Martin Freinedametz thought of bringing a world-class enduro rallye to the area during one of his many trail riding trips.

After a year or so spent scheming and planning on how to make the event happen Martin and his team were finally able to make the dream a reality in 2004 before going slightly



romaniacs '06



Wakker wheelies for the camera - bless!



KTM's Alex Antor keeps his Toomer tapped!



South African star Darryl Curtis lays it down just 30 kilometres short of the finish



Frickin' idiot!



Team DBR visit the Prologue podium...



bigger and better in '05 and then pulling out all the stops to make this year's Romaniacs a monster.

For the last two years the event has started and finished in Sibiu which is slap bang in the centre of the Carpathian mountain range but for '06 the event began in Romania's capital city - Bucharest - where we arrived late on Friday afternoon.

Saturday was spent signing on, scrutineering and getting the obligatory medical checks carried out. We both sailed through scrutineering - bike and body - without problems although the female medic did grab my love handles and say "too much sugar!" - cheeky mare! With all that sorted and a few extra unbudgeted expenses paid - medical test, 350 Euro emergency bond etc - we found ourselves penniless but ready to rip up the Prologue course in the Saturday night session.

The man-made course was situated on the concrete foundations of a long demolished building and featured all the usual obstacles you'd not expect to find on an enduro course - swinging bridges, gap jumps and concrete stair sections. It all looked quite spectacular but the most dangerous thing about any of the obstacles was their construction and during practice certain sections were closed down for repair as some of the jumps that were built from logs self destructed from the constant pounding

of enduro bikes.

After 20 minutes or so Geoff and I called it quits - we'd ridden every obstacle on offer and there was no point wearing out tyres and wasting energy in the blistering heat. As Wakker and I talked trash about the practice session and who did what first (what's that Geoff, you did no fist pumps?) our spannerman Spode arrived safely after flying in from Gatwick and bagging a lift to the city centre with some bloke he'd chatted up on the plane... Nice work Dean!

The next day was race day - the first of seven (pretty bizarre considering the organisers claimed it was a six-day event in pre-race literature). My plan for the day was to get the holeshot in the Prologue and not fall off during the race which would hopefully help us get a good start position for the first stage.

The race was split into odd and even numbers with the odds setting off first. This meant I wouldn't be going head-to-head with Wakker which probably wasn't a bad thing as we're both so competitive we'd take each other out just to get the win - well I'd take him out anyway. It also meant I got a good head-start so the sucker had no chance of beating me!

When the flag dropped for the start of my race I yanked the holey and took control of the race - yup, Team DBR were leading the Romaniacs! With one half of my plan working out nicely the other went to pot when I turned

my world upside-down with a wee crash in the tyre section. With Team DBR no longer leading the Romaniacs I kept it together long enough to finish third in my race while Geoff claimed victory in the evens. With a 3-1 I was pretty confident we'd taken the overall and would get to stand on top of the podium - especially seeing as I'd lapped the riding partners of the two guys who'd finished ahead of me while Wakker was still half-a-circuit away.

But as it turned out the organising team didn't think much to our performance at all and it didn't look like we'd be even setting foot on the podium until we had a word in the ear of Scottish race director Dougie MacLean. As it stands in the Romaniacs record books Team DBR finished the Prologue in second overall behind the KTM Romania team but Geoff and I know different - we was robbed!

A road ride through the streets of Bucharest and out into the countryside to the start of stage one followed the Prologue. Neither of us really knew what to expect once we'd entered the first stage and seeing as neither of us knew what we were doing with the GPS we were hoping the track would be as well marked as the pre-event bumpf claimed.

As we headed into stage one we soon found it wasn't. But we did discover that not 'officially' winning the Prologue might not have been such a bad thing as we came across the leading pair



Tanky yanks the holey and Team DBR leads the Romaniacs



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A pair of Cyril Despres fans wait for the Frenchman on a hill



Spode goes in for the kill!



©Cyrille Barthe/Red Bull Romaniacs

Godfrey on the gas!



Riaan van Niekerk ends the week in second spot



Sutty gets a little Saturday Night Fever in the prologue practice session

©Cyrille Barthe/Red Bull Romaniacs

drowned out in a river. With a better bit of line selection than our Romanian buddies Team DBR were leading the Romaniacs yet again!

But we didn't stay there long (again) as our lack of GPS experience caught us out and we ended up semi-lost until a pair of Austrians flew past us showing the way to the first deep river crossing. This particular stretch of river was so deep there were drowned out quads floating on top of it but remembering what was said at the riders' meeting the previous night we had to stick to exactly the route or we'd pick up a huge time penalty.

Our plan was to kill the bikes' engines and then push them across, that way they'd hopefully not suck any water into the engines. We both made it across upright but the river was so deep the two-smoker's air filter allowed water through into the engine – luckily, the Austrians who'd been leading suffered the same fate. By the time we emptied the engine of festering river water and re-kitted up we could see that the guys behind us had all given this section a big swerve and were riding alongside the top of the bank. With time to make up, Geoff and I took chase leaving the Austrians and an armada of floating quads in our wake.

The rest of our day followed the same formula – we rode hard, got lost and then did it all over again. We even managed to lose each other in some mountain pastures for half-an-hour or so before finally meeting up again on top of a large grassy hill.

After around four-and-half hours of hard

riding – and getting lost – we finally followed the course for long enough to make the finish in the ski resort of Sinaia. Spode was there to meet us along with the support crew for the other Brits in the Expert class – the Docklands Dirtriders (Chris Salt and Matt Hall) – who made it home just a little while later. With darkness falling Spode washed and half-prepped the bikes before we all ate then slept like legends.

Spode was first out of bed the next morning as he still had a lot of work to do on the bikes before we left for the start. Between Spode starting to work on the bikes and Wakker getting his lazy ass up and out of bed the biggest, meanest storm I've seen for some time hit the resort, flooding the local roads and topping up the rivers.

At the second of the previous evening's riders' meetings we'd been told the Expert and Pro class routes would be the same except for a section halfway through the day near Bram – home of Dracula's Castle. We were also told to expect GPS problems in certain areas and to follow the marker tapes during these times.

As Geoff and I set off from the start for the day we soon came across almost every other rider in our class looking lost and confused as nobody's GPS seemed to be making much sense. But after a while I noticed a small arrow, yelled at Geoff and we were on our way again. After following the course into a raging river and seeing Geoff take two trips over the bars in less than five minutes I was feeling quite happy. Not

only did it seem we'd left most of the other teams in our group behind us, our now correctly set-up GPS was telling us we were on the right track and I'd seen Godfrey almost brain himself – twice. Hehehe!

Half-an-hour later I was less happy. Geoff and I were sweating our nads off pushing and shoving our bikes up an almost impassable hillside. We could hear bikes being ridden off in the distance somewhere but with the GPS telling us we were on track and with route marker tapes within sight we kept on struggling up the climb.

We occasionally saw the determined Docklands Dirtriders and even a handful of Pro class riders who were struggling in the conditions too – what might have been a passable trail for the first few bikes had now become a rutted-out, slippery-as-hell, root-fest. By the time we reached the top of the mountain we'd killed two-and-a-half hours of time and adopted American pro Kevin Miller to our team. The Butcher was equally rubbish at reading his GPS and his batteries were on their last legs so he decided to tag along with us for the rest of the day.

The next bit of course was awesome fun to ride, starting with fast moorland going before moving into tight forests full of tough climbs and terrifying descents – the type of going we'd been promised and the real reason we'd driven to Romania to compete.

As we dropped down onto a short road section we came across an event support crew



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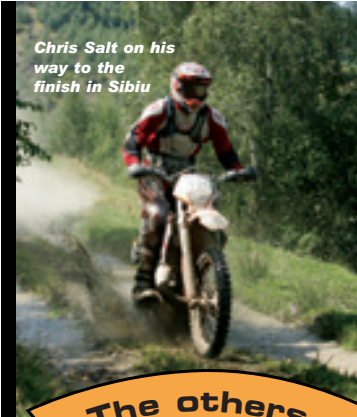
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Chris Salt on his
way to the
finish in Sibiu



Spode lends
Matt Hall a hand

The others

**Docklands
Dirtriders.**

Team DBR/No Fear weren't the only British team entered in the Expert class as Chris Salt and Matt Hall were riding under the Docklands Dirtriders banner. Chris is a youth project worker at the Newham Docklands Motorcycle Project while Matt makes his moolah trading in antiques.

While the full DBR team were unable to make it to the end (sorry Godfrey – Sully) the Docklands Dirtriders did and they even scored a creditable ninth place finish despite being dished out a 20-hour penalty on day two and did even better in the Epilogue, finishing third overall.

"After surviving six days and 800 miles of rocks, rivers and mountains Matt and I would probably have been happy to put the bikes in the van and set off home," reckons Chris later. "But we still had the final showdown to come – a three-lap race around the city streets of Sibiu.

"We walked the course on in 35 degree heat with some trepidation.

A team of Romanian workers hammered and banged the course together as thousands of spectators started to gather.

"The first straight was traditional Romaniacs stuff consisting of big logs, tyres, cars and trucks to ride over. The course then went up some steps and through a children's park and along a back street.

"The nerves really started to kick in as we walked up a steep narrow wooden bridge into a derelict concrete building. As we followed the course up endless flights of stairs we wondered what the ACU would say if they saw this. On reaching the roof it was nice to see some plastic KTM tape being put up to guide you away from the fall back to street level.

"Back down another set of stairs and through the basement the course then led out to a yard. From here there was the choice of a rickety wooden ramp which led back up to the first floor (this was the chicken line) or a freestyle jump that was positioned to launch you over a 15ft-plus gap in through an opening. "As we sat looking at the jump Andy – one of the course designers – was building himself up to do the jump. It wasn't fast but you certainly wanted to

make sure you made it across as the fall back down to earth didn't look good as three Pro riders found out later.

"The course then took a turn down into what looked like an open sewer before climbing back onto the street under the Red Bull arch and onwards to the start/finish straight. Although feeling rather apprehensive of what was to come we thought back to when we had first seen this race on TV and how the hooligan element had been one of the main things that had attracted us to it.

"As soon as the flag dropped all nerves disappeared and 30 minutes of the most intense and exhilarating riding began. Before we knew it the chequered flag was out, the race had ended and it was time to bask in the glory of finally finishing one of the world's toughest enduros."

As well as thoroughly enjoying the Epilogue, Chris and Matt had a fun week. "The only let down was the sometimes poor organisation and the questionable route interpretation by some teams. The high points were jumping in and out of buildings and riding across the tops of 2000 metre mountains while the low points were spending several hours struggling up the hill from hell after a thunderstorm only later to find it was a Pro not Expert route. Oh and riding three miles down cow **** hill knee-deep in slop. Would we go again? Definitely yes!"

The Docklands Dirtriders would like to thank the following people for making their Romaniacs dream a reality. (Angry) Gary Pilbeam, Richard and Charlotte Palya, Pro-Carbon, Kriega, Jim Aim Motorcycles, Paul Green Tyres, Moto Brox, Danger UK, Rallye of Discovery, Barwest Fabrications, Kelly Group and the Lettings Centre.



Angry Gary gets
ready to let rip



who were confused as to why we were running so late on the course. This confused us too as we figured we were well ahead of our competition who we hadn't seen since leaving them behind in the river near the start of the stage and we were positive we'd followed the course exactly.

As well as being confused we were short on fuel. The support crew promised us there was no fuel stop for some distance along the trail so they said they'd wait for us at the next filling station up the road so we could get gas and get back on course. That plan went sour when we got tugged by a local traffic cop who pointed us back to the forests — no matter how much we tried to convince him our road legal bikes were road legal.

With no other option available we were forced to stand up the support crew and carry on up the trail and just hope we didn't run out of fuel before we reached the next checkpoint. My bike didn't make it. After sitting down and sulking for a while we decided to drain some fuel from the Butcher's bike and head back to the road to wait for Spode.

After a little creativity we finally reached the finish in Sibiu although we did run over the allotted time for the stage which meant we picked up a 20-hour penalty. That was something we planned on fighting because we reckoned the rest of our class — bar the other Brits — didn't ride the proper course (the one that was programmed into the GPS).

Bizarrely, we were told that the GPS did have the correct course installed and we'd ridden the Pro-only route because we'd made a mistake. How it was possible for us to end up on a Pro-only route when we were clearly told that the course for the two classes was exactly the same was mystifying — it was especially 'mystifying' when you consider only the two British teams got it totally wrong.

I can only assume the correct information was given at the first riders' meeting and we'd been lied to during ours — the guy who hosted the meeting looked a little sheepish when we asked him if this was the case but we never really got to the bottom of it all.

That night back in the hotel I woke up at three, barfed half my insides up and then blasted the rest outta my rear. After seeing the



©Cyrille Barthelemy/Red Bull Romaniacs

event medic the next morning I knew I was done for the week — an infection had taken a hold of the Sutt gut and no matter what I put in it came right back out. Actually admitting I couldn't go on was hard but with the event being point-to-point rather than multi-lap it would have been foolish to give it a go and have some sort of physical meltdown a million miles from anywhere.

That day I slept in the van while Spode drove us to our next destination. I was totally out of it but still secretly hoping I'd be well enough to ride later in the week.

The next day was another bad one. I still felt mega fragile but decided to drive and get a little normality back into my existence while giving the Spodemeister a rest. We were travelling behind the Docklands support crew — Angry Gary Pilbeam and Richard and Charlotte Palya — but after stopping to lose a little liquid (orally this time) they got away until we caught them in the next village where they were stopped at a filling station.

As I waited for the oncoming traffic to clear before turning left to join them I heard a screeching of tyres before a huge impact shunted the van down the road. I can't believe it — I already felt like crap and some dumbass in a Dacia beer truck had just rear ended me!

Aside from a little whiplash everyone was fine and the van was still driveable but not quite so pretty. After a little excursion to the police station and then the other driver's insurance company so they could see the damage for themselves we were good to go again and the rest of the drive to the Romaniacs next overnight stop at Roman spa town Baile Herculane was somewhat dull.

Baile Herculane was somewhat dull too and the phallic looking hotel and its staff seemed to be stuck in the swinging sixties. The food was good though and I managed my first solid meal in two days.

While I was feeling ill and getting my back doors stoved in Geoff was keeping it real and riding in an attempt to make the finish even though he wouldn't be included in the results — fair play to the big fella. I'd started eating properly again but still felt too weak to even contemplate getting on a bike although I kept kidding myself — and anyone who'd listen — that I'd maybe give the last day a go.

As we left Baile Herculane and headed back towards Petrosani (with Spode barking at roadside dogs — don't ask why) we followed Angry Gary to the first of the day's service checks where we waited and we waited and we waited. Geoff finally turned up and we found out why we'd been waiting so long — he'd only gone and ripped his shifter off so he'd been stopping to change gear by hand every time he'd needed to. Despite all his difficulties he still managed to finish the day even though he was beginning to look a little worn out.

Spode spent most of the night repairing Wakker's weapon which was in need of plenty of TLC. While he worked I handed out stickers to the local nippers who were thrilled that anything as exciting as the Romaniacs would pass through their town. I also decided that I was done riding for the week — with just one full day and the Epilogue left to run Geoff and I agreed it would be unfair to race the inner city enduro in Sibiu as we hadn't officially finished the event.

When Wakker set off for his final day of riding Spode and I decided to try and find a proper section of track to watch the remaining Romaniacs come through. After driving up a forest track for a few miles we found a peach of an uphill that tested even the best of riders and really showed us what the Romaniacs is all about.

We bumped into a couple of Cyril Despres fans halfway up the hill who'd been roaming Romania in search of their hero for the last few days. They weren't too disappointed when we told them he'd retired from the event — probably because they were half-wasted on the Romanian equivalent of Special Brew — and they happily cheered on all the riders as they pushed and shoved themselves up the rocky climb.

The Docklands Dirtriders were having a great day and came through around fourth or fifth team and that's after they'd stopped to repair Matt's radiator. After Spode and I helped pull them up the climb we waited for Wakker but after a couple of hours we figured he wasn't coming so we headed back to the hotel where we expected to find him waiting for us. He wasn't there when we arrived but he did come in shortly after — pretty happy he'd finished out the week but mega-****ed we weren't at the finish to watch him come in. Oops!

And that was pretty much that. Since we'd both decided to give the Epilogue a swerve (we thought it would be unfair to win it in front of all those people and TV cameras only for the organisers to have to explain we'd been disqualified from the race earlier in the week) we decided to load up the van and head home, finally making it back to base around 30 hours after leaving Sibiu.

Even though we had a pretty tough time in Romania — sickness, road accidents, poorly programmed GPS as well as poor communication with the race organisers etc — we reckon the awesome riding more than makes up for any of the downsides so we'll most likely be back for '07.

Next year we'll be leaner, meaner and more willing to bend the rules (just like the locals)! Haha! Who am I trying to kid? What I mean is next year we'll be more willing to bend the rules. So watch out Romania, we're coming back and this time we're gonna come out on top.



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Walker's whirl

Same story,
different perspective

SUTTON! That man has a lot to answer for... The Red Bull Romaniacs is billed as the toughest off-road race on earth and I would have no argument with that.

Multi-day trail riding can wear you down after a couple of days but this event is almost sadistic in the way it punishes its competitors. The atmosphere at the event is simple – shape up or ship out. The terrain and organising team take no prisoners and you have to be prepared to take it to the limit and beyond.

The Prologue course was nuts with all kinds of rocks, concrete drops and steps, tyres, wooden jumps, rope bridges and single track chucked into its layout to try and deplete the entry before they'd even seen a mountain!

I was pretty tense before practice but seeing the Dawg go off first in training meant I had to get my head down and I decided I'd go for all the major jumps and sections and not take any of the chicken runs. Sutt (apparently) took a wrong turn on lap one just before the biggest jump on the course leaving me and Cyril Despres going bar-to-bar to be the first to clear it – little old me and one of the best off-roaders in the world heading for a 20 foot tall, ridiculous looking rickety wooden jump together...

He pulled out of it and I kept the Toomer tapped and cleared the leap with no worries. Take that Dawg – I jumped it first so deal with it!

Sutt claims he did a fist pump over it on his first go but I didn't see that so maybe it didn't actually happen. It was all good fun and we were pretty happy at this stage and to top it off our crew chief turned up from the airport. Dean 'Spode' Shelfer had arrived. Rock n' Roll! Day one was good for me as the Prologue went well with only one crash where the KTM ended up in a tree. Sutt was riding good and finished his part third and I was the leading even number. But they – that's the organising team – somehow gave the win to some Romanian guys and it was only after I pointed out that we were first and third did they give us second overall for the Prologue. It was a mega feeling to be on the Red Bull podium.

A road ride to the start of the day's 85km stage followed the Prologue. Our GPS navigation system proved too much for

us dimwits to set up so the stage consisted of following people and tracks for the duration. We actually took the lead of the event after about a kilometre of that first stage as the Romanian guys bogged themselves into the first of many river crossings.

The stage was really fun and we both rode well but we were learning the rules of the event quickly. On a particularly nasty river crossing where the water was up to the seat we were drying our bikes out after struggling to the other side when we noticed most of the other teams simply missing the crossing out. In my book that's cheating. It's simple, they make the course and you stick to it, that's what I was there for – the most extreme terrain and river crossings they could throw at me and the Dawg!

We made it to the finish and Spode was there to let us know we were around fifth team home. We were pretty amazed and we were back in daylight which was more than most teams managed. The Nitro Circus crew from the States had to spend the night in the woods after baby-sitting Streetbike Tommy in his first ever off-road race!

Five o'clock the next morning in the Carpathian mountains and the heavens are open, it's cold, windy, misty and Spode is in the car park of the hotel prepping the KTMs for the day's action. Legendary.

With our GPS set to give us a track to follow I felt sure that we could have a good day and move up in the result table. It wasn't to be. I followed the route on the GPS with Sutt in tow. Unfortunately, it was the Pro route and we should have been going around what seemed like Mt Everest instead of straight up it. It took around three-and-a-half hours to do just a few kilometres and all the way up the Pro riders were stopping to help each other.

When we eventually got off the mountain we realised that every other team – except us and the Docklands legends – had gone on the easy route which took about half-an-hour. I've seen some knackered people in my time but a couple of times that morning I thought the Dawg was going to pass out. It was a tough day.

Near the top we hooked up with one of





Cheers people!

A mahoosive
thanks to...

To compete in the Romaniacs is a big deal and unless you've got an enormous budget or a massive overdraught facility you're not gonna do it without a little help. The following companies helped make this feature a reality and we honestly can't thank any one of them enough.

First of all we have to thank Shaun at KTM UK for supplying two new bikes for the event. Both bikes – an EXC250 and EXC-F 250 – were more than tough enough to go the distance even when the riders were not.

We'd also like to thank off-road industry peeps Phillip at No Fear and Spy, Tubman at Concept 21 Designs for the shirt printing, Matt at Sixsione, Graham at M-Bo Racing for the 2C wheels, Rob at Feridax for the Sidi boots, Matt at Science in Sport, Craig at DEP pipes, Barry at Michelin, David Banks at Motorex and Matt at Madison for the Cycra product. Obviously, even getting to Romania takes a fair bit of wonga

so we'd also like to thank the following people and their companies. Billy at Nutt Travel helped us immensely by finding and booking a ferry to get us from Dover to Calais and then back again. Nutt Travel is absolutely the finest company there is when it comes to sorting ferry crossings in the UK and Ireland. Check them out at www.nutttravel.com or give them a call on 028 7035 1199.

Financial aid also came from paintless dent removal legend Neil Carroll at Ding Master (www.dingmaster.co.uk), heavy plant provider Robin Powell at Molson Holdings (www.molsonholdings.com), 20 Inch bicycle manufacturer Anthony Revell at Stolen BMX (www.stolenbm.com) and marketing maestro Karl Sorensen at Armadillo Marketing (www.armadillomarketing.co.uk).

Last and not least we'd like to thank Spode for being some sort of legend and also his new best friend Angry Gary.

the Pro riders – Kevin Miller from the States. He was a really cool bloke and we rode together for the rest of the day. We'd been on route for so long that fuel was running low on the two-strokes and we weren't anywhere near a fuel stop. We tried to get some fuel from a town but the police stopped us from getting into it. So we decided to head back on track to tackle another peak to get to a fuel point.

But the Dawg machine ran dry at the top. The only choice was to head back towards the road. We borrowed 25ml from Kevin's tank and a little from mine to put in the Dawg's and off we went freewheeling down the mountain, only starting the bikes for a few seconds at a time to get through the mud.

The day was wrecked but Spode came and rescued us with fuel and food. Suttly loaded his bike up and myself and Kevin rode to find the nearest checkpoint behind the Vito of love.

We met up with the Docklands support crew and decided the three of us would finish the day out. Dawg whipped his weapon out and off we went – eventually finishing the day but unfortunately out of time.

If day two had been a disastrous day three was a nightmare. Suttly was really ill in the night which forced him out of the race meaning Team DBR were disqualified. We were all absolutely gutted and I asked one of the organisers if I could carry on alone. He said no and proceeded to insult me which went down like a lead balloon. I was determined to ride and after a little discussion with Suttly and Spode the guys were happy to go to the end of the next stage with me and then see if Suttly could carry on the next day so we could at least reach the finish as I had promised myself we would get there, whatever happened.

A couple of the Nitro Circus boys had had some trouble in the race so I rode the day, mostly on road, with Andy Grider (who had cut his cornea) and Streetbike Tommy (who was just too useless to keep going in the event). It wasn't ideal but at times this was a serious challenge as it took a good six hours and watching Tommy trying to wheelie the 450 EXC wasn't pretty

at times.

The next morning I spoke to an Austrian rider whose team-mate had broken some ribs. He asked if he could ride with me as I told him I was going to try to reach the finish. A few minutes later we were on route and tearing up the trails. With both of us on navigation duty and the pace being pushed the absolutely amazing terrain unfolded in front of us like a computer game. This was what I had come to Romania for – great riding with serious challenges...

Bad luck had stopped our team assault on the race and I was gutted for Suttly, Spode, our sponsors and myself but the breathtaking riding was more than making up for the disappointments. A truly amazing day.

We started off over an hour behind the teams as we had to wait for the hobby and quad riders to leave the start before we could begin our day. The pace we ran that day was fast and we took a lot of time out of the top team that day. That was a good feeling.

The next day was a 6am start and the stage was around 240km in length. My new Austrian buddy and I again started at the back of the pack and got into a reasonable rhythm. We followed some of the Pro routes in the morning as once again our GPS had been programmed wrong. We didn't mind as it is all part of the challenge and part of the fun. When you have the opportunity to ride in this type of going you have to make the most of it.

Just when you think you're having fun in this race it jumps up and kicks you straight in the nuts. On one of the Pro descents the EXC-F got away from me and broke the shifter clean off leaving only the snapped off bolt inside the shaft!

That hit hard as there was 180km to go to finish that day and I was stuck in first gear. After a discussion with my new buddy I said I wanted to get to a service point where I could try to get the sheared bolt out with the help of my trusty sidekicks Dawg and Spode.

That was only 80km away so we got the bike into second gear and trundled along at about eight miles per hour for a few kilometres before we came across the event organiser who I'd called a

*****r a couple of days earlier. I kept my head down and let my Austrian buddy speak to his countryman who had a little stump of a broken shifter which I could use.

As soon as the guy realised it was for me he wanted \$200 for the shifter. I promptly offered him a naked mud wrestle in front of the TV cameras for the piece of precious broken metal but he just looked confused.

Off we went and the pain began. At times I was having to stop every few metres to clean the shift shaft, take the shifter from under my GPS, fit it onto the shaft and then make a hand shift.

To top my day off I joined the 'TC' club when I hit a hidden hole which sent me into the bars stomach first, causing a little accident in the Sixsione undercrackers! Not a good day but still a lot of fun and all part of it. I was pretty happy to finish and see Suttly looking alive for the first time in a few days and Spode with the video camera filming the finish of the day.

I was really looking forward to the last proper off-road day as Spode had been up a good part of the night with one of his 'special' Romanian friends getting the bolt out of the gear shaft. Fair play, he was pretty knackered at this point of the week so he could have easily given up but he knew how important it was for me to get myself and the beloved KTM 250 EXC-F to the finish of the day and the finish of the event. I really appreciated this kind of effort as it was getting emotional at this point.

I was all kitted up and fitting another superb Michelin tyre and mousse to see me to the finish when my new Austrian buddy rocked up and gave me the news that he too had gone down with 'Dawg belly' – I couldn't believe it!

Off I went to find yet another riding buddy and this time I came back with two of them. Jeremy 'Tenacious J' Rawle and Levis 'not 501s' Lavallee let me join them for the final assault. Jeremy is a partner in Godfrey Entertainment and Levis is a pro snowmobile racer and both are part of the Nitro Circus crew.

It was good of them to let me join them for the day and as it turned out it was a pretty wild one. The riding beat

everything that had gone before and there was some of the most amazing terrain I have ever ridden on.

It was definitely a special day and with 30km to go I lost them on the gnarliest uphill I've ever ridden. After sitting for half-an-hour at the top of the climb without hearing a bike I headed for the finish expecting to see the two guys there waiting. A few kilometres along I came across the track manager who told me I had to follow him to the road to get to the finish.

I hadn't come all that way to ride to the finish on the road and I wanted to complete the course so I gave him the 'look, what's that over there?' routine and made a break for it – 30 kilometres and four river crossings later I reached the finish. I was so happy it was untrue – tiredness and happiness, what a combination!

My team-mates for the day got back to the hotel a little while after me and we laughed and discussed the day's incredible action for hours after. This event has changed me in a way I cannot describe (it's all that time you spent in the woods with your new 'friends' ain't it – Suttly). It took me on a journey which I will never forget and the amount of great people I met along the way is amazing.

The Red Bull Romaniacs threw up some surprises and a lot of testing times but Team DBR got through and got back safe and well. We only had a couple of days to come up with the gear to try to get through the event and our sponsors stepped up and without them we wouldn't have got further than Dover. The 250 EXC-F is one serious machine. That bike took me over 1700km and never missed a beat – and I mean never. The bike can't be faulted and it easily completed the greatest test for a bike I can imagine. The thing was up to its neck in water so many times and it didn't even produce a little tickly cough. I personally would like to thank everyone from the Romania crew – Suttly, Spode, Angry Gary and the entire Docklands Dirtriders team (well done Matt and Chris), the organisers, the entire Nitro Circus crew and the idiot who rear ended the Dawg at the fuel station...





IF YOU wanna see something grow it's no good just standing by and waiting for it to enlarge right there in front of your eyes – you gotta step back, give it room to breathe then revisit it every so often to truly appreciate just how much your chosen item is flourishing.

Of course, bigger isn't always better. I personally feel that size without quality is nothing and if you don't believe me check what your girlfriend has to say on the matter. Or ask yourself this. What would you rather have, a small sensuous steak pie or a mahoosive monster pastry filled with dog-food quality meaty chunks? Mmmm pie, oh how I love you and miss your touch.

But anyway back to the matter of size and quality. Forgetting about pie for one moment, let's move on to the subject of reading matter. Would you prefer something that's direct and straight to the point or something that meanders and is lost in pie-based analogies? That's exactly what I figured so I think it's probably time to crack on to the subject of a man who uses analogies in a much better way than I ever could – and none of them are pie-based.

Stefan Elvin is the Swedish meatball-loving owner and operator of MX Heaven USA. The 37-year-old ex-Husaberg development rider, GP racer and FOJ – Friend Of Jeremy (McGrath) – has been residing in the States on and off since 1990 and in that time has learnt plenty about the modern way of riding and the training techniques needed to perfect it.

During that time Stefan's also been creating one of California's premier riding and training facilities – a place he likes to call MX Heaven USA. MX Heaven is based on the outskirts of the city of Perris and the ever-growing facility has gone from being a rickety house with some unsculpted land to the full on moto-complex you'd see today if you ventured to the top end of Jimmy Taylor Drive.

I've personally known about Stefan's programme for quite a long time. My initial introduction came through a copy of Yank mag Motocross Action which did a small feature on Stefan's MX camp in '98 or so. Then in 2004 I finally made the trip Stateside to check out Stefan's idea of utopia. Since my initial visit I've returned every six months or so to make sure Stefan keeps his promise of making the facility even better.

From its humble beginnings (you've only got to check out the neighbouring properties for an idea of what was here) the facility now has its own backyard SX circuit (there's also an MX Heaven-owned national-standard outdoor track just minutes up the road), a corner techniques practice area and a state-of-the-art workshop including bike washbays and a laundry room.

And that's not forgetting the single storey house that can easily sleep around 24 riders in comfortable bunk style rooms. The house also has a lounge with a big-ass television, DVD player and PS2, two shower rooms (you gotta be fast to be first) and the most important place of all – the kitchen and dining area which also contains two well-stocked and often-opened fridges!

But while the infrastructure that MX Heaven has is certainly impressive it's nothing compared to the little extras that most visitors take for granted. Things like the bike wash detergent, the laundry room products and then there's the reassuring knowledge that you're able to lay your hand on whatever tool you may need to service your scoot of choice.

Oh crap! The bikes – I almost forgot to mention the bikes! When you stay at MX Heaven the use of a bike is included in the price of the stay and while most riding holidays give a choice of maybe one or two models of machine – and all training camps require you to bring your own bike – at MX Heaven you can ride almost anything you want because Stefan has them all!*

And with all the bikes being well maintained new model year machines – there are two and four-stroke models to pick from – you're guaranteed to find something that suits the way you ride even if it's not what you'd choose to race back home.

That's what MX Heaven visitor Luke Spence is doing when I swing by MX Heaven USA for my latest visit. Luke's an AMCA Expert who normally races a KTM SXS-F 250 but out in America he's running one of the all-new twin-pipe CRF250s to good effect during his two-month stay with Stefan.

Another Englishman in the camp is 16-year-old Brit champs runner Richie Leech. Richie's spent most of this year jetting back and forth between California and his Norwich home as he's not only running in the British championships on a Danger UK Honda but he's also trying to qualify for the AMA Air Nautiques Amateur National Motocross Championship finals and cram in his GCSEs all at the same time.

As well as Brit boys Richie and Luke, Stefan's also accommodating Frenchman Kamy Bruder, Brazilian Cesar Popinhak and Canadian bruiser Drew Clegg. With the exception of Drew – who's in California preparing for the upcoming Canadian Nationals – everyone's here in the hope of making it to the week-long finals of the biggest amateur motocross championship in the world which is held at Loretta Lynn's ranch in Hurricane Mills, Tennessee.

Qualifying for the finals is quite a difficult ►

Kamy Bruder surveys Stefan Elvin's idea of heaven





HEAVEN ON EARTH!

We check in at MX Heaven USA to make sure things are progressing as planned in Perris

Words and photos by Sully



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task for these boys as they're competing in the ultra-tough Southwest region. First off they gotta come in the first 12 at their area qualifier then the top five at the regionals. When you consider that each region is bigger than the whole of Britain – and certainly has way more riders – you'll understand it ain't easy making the final 40 who line up at Loretta's.

I arrive at MX Heaven three days before the first Southwest area qualifier that's due to be held at Competitive Edge motocross park in Hesperia. But when I arrive the place seems to be empty – everyone's gone playing racquetball and as I'm worn out from flying I hit the sack.

It's sunny when I wake up, even though it is only six in t'morning local time. My room-mate Drew's fast asleep in a rapidly spreading puddle of his own drool but I can hear movement from out in the kitchen so I go and check out who's making all the noise.

It turns out Kamy's making some brekkie before going to the gym. Over a year has

passed since I last saw the fast Frenchman and back then he was on crutches after a huge get off. Even though it's great to see Kamy I can't help thinking I wish he'd get a move on as the sooner he gets gone to the gym, the sooner he'll be back and the sooner we can all go riding.

In what seems like no time at all Bruder's back and we're all kitted up and ready to rip. The boys warm up on the backyard SX circuit before we head out to the skills area so Stefan can teach us a thing or two – Elvin's a big fan of short, sharp corner circuits and he reckons they're the best kind of practice anyone can do.

You'd be surprised just how hard a sub-20-second, 12-corner circuit makes you work as there's no letting up – especially not with Elvin's eagle eye keeping watch for poor technique, laziness and drooping elbows. After a five-minute blast – which feels more like 20 due to the intensity of the condensed course – Stefan pulls everyone in and dissects their skills – or lack of 'em – before letting them go at it

again. It's surprising to see how quickly most people improve in a short time and this training is something they all do each and every day – it doesn't take a genius to figure out how much riders improve in a week or a month and so on...

Next on the daily agenda is a similar exercise on a track laid out in a sand wash meaning five minutes feels like 40 in the loose, whooped out going. Lessons are undoubtedly learned and while it's not as much fun as driving to the Lake Elsinore Pro Track to practice busting big air and pulling sick whips the corner practice sessions are what makes all the difference to a rider's skill level – ask Ricky or James what they're doing when they're not pounding out motos.

After Thursday's training Friday is spent prepping the bikes in the MX Heaven workshop, cleaning kit in the laundry and loading the big-rig for tomorrow's race at Competitive Edge. When everything's good to go it's pretty much dinner time and tonight's meal is gonna be





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The real cost!

What's included, what's not and whatnot

The first thing most people want to know about something is how much will it cost? While the MX Heaven California ride trips are easily quantifiable – cost of flights, cost of riding, cost of nosebag etc – the training camps are definitely harder to price up and that's why the final amount differs for each and every rider. There are many ways to look at it but the easiest is to look at what you could get out of the experience and then see if you can put a price on it – it's pretty much impossible. Why? Read on...

When you arrive in California Stefan will pick you and your bags up from the airport then drive you directly back to base. There he'll hook you up with a good-as-new bike, the space, tools and parts required to work on it, a place to live and sleep then all the basics you need to get by – food, water etc. There's even somewhere to wash and dry all your clothes and the equipment and consumables needed to do it. Now let's look at the riding side of things. At MX Heaven there's the supercross circuit in the back yard to ride and easy access to the public riding areas that are situated just behind the house where you'll find loads of little technical practice areas. Also within an hour's drive of MX Heaven are a fistful of awesome tracks –

Starwest, Perris Raceway, Lake Elsinore, Cuhulia Creek, Glen Helen, Competitive Edge and more.

When you go riding at any one of these tracks the full MX Heaven big-rig is rolled out. This truck is so damn cool it puts many professional teams' units to shame – there's no arriving at the track in a ****y old pick-up with a battered looking 450 when you're rollin' with the MX Heaven crew. And just like when you're back at base there's everything you'll ever need to get the job done properly – parts, tools, food, water and even a big old flat-screen TV and DVD combo in the rider lounge. Then when you do head back home a hard day's riding there are four power washers ready to clean off all the dirt and enough detergent and cleaning pads and other aftercare products to return your bike back to its original good-as-new state. Now you can chuck your kit in the laundry and go relax – everything is easy. Now imagine doing the same thing without any of the physical back-up of MX Heaven or the years of knowledge accumulated by Stefan and his team. Even if you could find out all the information you need before you fly out to America, putting it all into practice once you're there is gonna be both difficult and extremely expensive.

And that's why MX Heaven's package is such a great deal – it may seem to cost you a little bit more but the reality is you're getting a bloody bargain!



The MX Heaven big rig lets you travel to the races in style

The laundry. Just like your local one but without any old ladies hogging the dryer



Star student - Part One!

French fancy!

Most pro motocross racers have some kind of message for their fans whether it be transmitted through words or by subliminal product placement. 'Drink this energy drink' is a popular one, as is 'buy this brand of sunglasses' and sometimes the messages can even be quite sinister such as 'riding dirty can help you win races'. Anyhow...one pro who hasn't made the big time yet – but he's not too far away – is Frenchman Kamy Bruder who's got something important to say and he's aiming to say it from the very top step of the podium. If you're wondering who the hell Kamy is, what Kamy's message is and why you should want to hear it then read on. While many of today's up and coming racers shun an education in order to become a professional motocross racer Kamy's well aware that even if you devoted 24 hours a day to being a racer things may not work out the way you wish. "I believe it's primordial to not put all your eggs in the same basket – it's far too risky and dangerous to devote yourself only to motocross," says Kamy between sessions at the MX Heaven supercross track. "Motocross is an education of life – just like travelling. In fact it's probably one of the best – it teaches values such as passion, discipline, or devotion. It also teaches respect and grace and therefore we fight to reach the top and we strive to become the best."

"My goal, apart from becoming a champion – just like everybody else – is to be able to show the motocross community and especially the young racers that there are more wonders to life than just motocross – getting an education is part of it. And believe me it is painful for me to say but it is the truth. And hopefully, someday, once in the spotlight, once I'm respected for my accomplishments, I will have the chance to scream it to the world."

"We need to realise that there is no cheating life. And please don't tell me that in order to become one of the best racers in the world you need to do only and just that. Because you'd be lying to me and to yourself. There are 24 hours in a day,

withdraw eight for sleep and you are left with 16. Do you train 16 hours a day? Do you even train for half of that? Probably not.

"Devotion is a tricky word. We like using it when it's convenient – to refer to our sport – but step back for a moment and try to apply devotion to everything you do in life and soon enough you might realise that, indeed, the crazy French dude is right. "I am fighting everyday in order to be able to keep my 4 GPA (grade point average) at school as well as improving and getting better to become one of the best motocross riders. A 4GPA means straight As and I don't ever want to lose it. You ever get one B and your GPA drops to 3.9 and there's no coming back to it."

"It means so much to me as it helps with getting scholarships and without it I would never be able to be here in the United States going to school and doing what I most love, racing. I mean, look at it this way, how many of you guys would like to be racing in the US? Probably most of you! And thanks to the fact that I love learning and thanks to MX Heaven USA and their support, I'm not only living it, I'm loving it! Only time will tell if Kamy gets to relay his message to the world. He certainly has the right attitude to do well and his speed is already very close to that of the top-20 AMA guys and he's still continuing his full-time education.

To manage this Kamy has to fit more into his weekly schedule than most folk can cram into a week. A typical day will see the 19-year-old up at 5am to spend a couple of hours at the gym before doing a full day at school then coming back to base to either study at home, do more training or work on one of his bikes. With the hectic daily schedule Kamy only gets to ride at weekends – except when he's on summer and spring break – meaning he has to maximise the quality of his riding time which means plenty of tedious techniques training on rutted figure of eight corner circuits.

It's tough if you want to get to the top and Kamy's levels of motivation are what's needed if you're gonna make it. And even if he doesn't he's still got plenty to fall back on. Keep an eye out for the name Kamy Bruder in the future – one way or another he's gonna do something great with his life.

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Star Student - Part Two!

Luke Spence

Luke Spence is an 18-year-old apprentice plumber from Daventry and when he's not bending pipes he's trying not to bend 'bars on his KTM SXS-F 250. Luke's a prime example of the kind of customer Stefan's MX Heaven experience creates as most people who pop over to Perris usually wanna come back – and Luke is no exception.

"I went to MX Heaven in January for a week on the Anaheim supercross ride trip and it was amazing. I thought I'd definitely like to go back so I talked to Stefan about returning to do some training – I ended up coming back and I'm here for 10 weeks! I'm having the experience of a lifetime and it's just as I imagined – like heaven. I ride the bike about five times a week and go to the gym with some of the other guys who are stopping here – Drew, Dave and Richie. We all have a good time and a good laugh as we are all into the same thing. I love it here so much I'm hoping to come back to MX Heaven in January '07 for even more training!"

Team America bask in the Californian sun



Luke Spence improved loads during his stay



Working at the bike wash, at the bike wash yeah!



something special because award-winning chef Rocky's rolled up and his meal's are always sublime.

As an MX Heaven training camp or ride trip inductee you can expect an evening meal prepared by Rocky on a regular basis. Tonight's menu is meat loaf with onion gravy and mashed potatoes – sweet! Rocky also prepares enough microwaveable pasta and sauce to see us through the next few days of race action – pasta makes you faster, right? With an early start planned for race day, bed's the only place to head for directly from the dinner table.

That night I only produce half the amount of Zs I need so when Kamy comes around to wake us all up (an hour earlier than planned – god damn daylight saving time) he's lucky I don't do him in. Luckily, common sense prevails and I crack on with my morning cleansing ritual before heading out to the minibus to catch a lift to the races.

Competitive Edge is an hour drive from MX Heaven HQ and at silly o'clock in the morning even California's freeways are empty so it's possible to speed along to your destination quite nicely. But, as we roll up at the track, the

queue to get into the facility is immense – and the queue for sign-up even more so.

With practice well under way all the MX Heaven racers are still in line trying to fill in the required forms – that's race entry forms, Loretta Lynn's Qualifier forms, AMA licence forms and Guardian consent forms (for the nippers). That's a whole lotta form filling going on right there. In the end it all gets too much so we collectively chuck our forms at Stefan's sidekick Sam along with a fistful of dollars then hightail it to the truck to get kitted up and turn some laps.

The Comp Edge track is decidedly Euro feeling – high speed and choppy with a mixed desert sand/clay base. There are some big jumps out there but they're all very safe with well-built take-offs and rounded landings making it a fun place to ride and race with plenty of line options. After a very enjoyable practice session or three it was time for the races to begin.

The weirdest thing about the Loretta's qualifiers is the length of races. Each and every group from the four to six-year-old 51cc shaft-drive oil-injected Stock class to the 250/Open A Pro Sport (the premier amateur

class in America) run five lap motos – that's under 10 minutes for the fast boys and over 20 for the pee wees!

It's possible to enter multi classes – and with 33 to choose from determined by age, gender, experience and if you run a stock bike or not – there's plenty to choose from. Of course it's also possible to run a stock bike in a modified class so the possibilities are almost endless.

With four MX Heaven riders racing the qualifiers Sam and rookie Dave (for 2007 he'll just be called Dave) are flat-out prepping bikes and brushing start-gates and this is all part of the MX Heaven package. And their help seems to do the trick as over the two days three of the four do enough to qualify.

It's hard to say whether Cesar, Richie or Kamy would have made it to the next round of qualifiers without Stefan's guidance and support or exactly how much harder and costly the experience would have been had the MX Heaven programme not been in existence. But there are some things I can tell you for certain – the programme is constantly improving, the facility is getting better and my need to return is growing stronger.

team profile

Team leader Carl Nunn is going for his second British crown on the trot



Jason Dougan



Mark Bishop



Patrick Gilboy





Jim Murro is closing in on the British U21 championship title



Serge Dijsselbloem

DOUBLE TOPS?

With two British titles in their grasp - and big changes for '07 in the pipeline - EA KTM are riding high...

Words and photos by Toby Fuller



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Factfile

Carl Nunn

Age: 26

Height: 5' 10"

Weight: 12st

Marital status: Lives in Mildenhall with his girlfriend Naomi, daughter Mia and new son Harley

Hometown: Bury St. Edmunds

Favourite food: Italian

Other interests: Radio controlled cars and minibikes – not bad on a skateboard either!

Mechanic: Serge Dijsselbloem



EA KTM are one of the biggest and most professional motocross teams in the paddock, really standing out from the crowd with their vibrant orange livery and slick set-up.

MX2 specialists, their main man is Carl Nunn who spearheads the team as he chases his second consecutive British title. And Nunn's got strong support from Jim Murro who's very close to wrapping up his first U21 crown.

The Bedfordshire-based team have been on the British scene since Y2K when they raced their debut season with Honda machinery under the Phoneparts banner. The following year they went orange but it wasn't until 2005 that the team – by now renamed EA KTM to take into account new title sponsor EA Scaffolding – landed the big prize when Nunn took the British MX2 title.

Team owner and Phoneparts founder Mark Bishop is a long-time motocross enthusiast who's enjoying his second bite at the MX cherry as the 37-year-old explains. "I used to race as a teenager in the Eastern Centre before work commitments forced me to pack it all in. Many years on I went to a motocross meeting, got the

bug again and in 1999 started to support riders. The following year I formed Phoneparts Honda before switching in 2001 to KTM."

The team also have a satellite squad backed by clothing manufacturer Moggstar. After starting the season with former top schoolie Patrick Gilboy and ex British U21 champ Ben Saunders on their books, Jason Dougan was drafted in for the rest of the year when Ben was injured.

"The reason behind this decision [to run a satellite team] was that we wanted to have two teams of two and obviously Carl runs under the EA banner with Jim. But with the artic being so big and not being able to get into some of the tracks we wanted to run a smaller set-up so it was easier logistically and also another way to get extra sponsors into the sport.

"All four riders were originally meant to be under the same awning but after Ben got injured we decided to run a smaller set-up for the Under 21s with Jim and Patrick."

Over the last five years the team have nurtured young British talent and along the way produced two U21 champions with a possible third – Murro leads the ultra-competitive series

with one round to go – on the horizon. The emphasis has been on the smaller class but don't forget KTM have a new 450 on the market for 2007 so next year could see an MX1 machine under the awning.

"I would like to concentrate on the MX2 as we involve ourselves with the Under 21s," explains Mark, "but with the new 450 coming out for next season we imagine KTM will want a rider to be on it so we're waiting to see which direction KTM UK want to support us. We will definitely be running two MX2 riders next year and possibly another in MX1."

At the other end of the scale it seems the bigger teams are concentrating more and more on youth development and EA KTM are also expanding in this direction. "It's something we're looking into at the moment and we will be supporting a youth squad in 2007 which we are currently putting together."

The logistics of running such a high-profile outfit means lots of hard work – fortunately Mark's got a well-oiled team together that's fully up to the job.

"On race day with regards to Carl it's fairly simple as his mechanic Serge looks after his

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Tony Cairoli
MX2 World Championship

bikes for the world championships as well as the domestic picture – for the British [championship] the bikes will turn up on a Saturday in the EA livery. Bubs looks after Jim's and Patrick's bikes in the week and Phil Roe has stayed with Jason since his departure from RWJ and looks after the bikes in Southampton. But he regularly comes to the workshop in Bedfordshire and spends some time there to get things dialled for the weekend.

"The truck driver Tom Brown looks after the artic and makes sure everything is there on time, clean and tidy and gets the awning up with the tables and chairs then Bubs and the others including the rest of the riders will set up the 7.5 tonne truck to make it one big KTM line-up.

"Everyone mucks in with the food but primarily it's Sam [Jim's girlfriend] making sure there's plenty there for sponsors and guests.

Steve Sankey, Jim's mechanic, will work with Jim on race weekends and occasionally in the week. Bubs will look after Patrick, Serge comes over from Holland to look after Carl's machines and Phil will do his bit on Jason's bikes."

EA KTM may be supporting a factory rider in Carl Nunn – who races GPs under the Champ KTM banner – but does that support extend to the rest of the team regarding factory parts?

"No, not really as far as product support is concerned," says Mark. "It's more knowledge and they [Champ] are very forthcoming so if there's something we need to know then they will help us out on that side of things but KTM UK help us out with product which we are very grateful for."

So what's it like working so closely with a world class rider like Carl Nunn?

"He's very easy to work with and nothing seems to faze him ever," reckons Mark. "He

knows how well he can ride and is very much his own person and he always likes to make sure everyone is okay, not just himself. As far as racing is concerned I don't think Carl really has a weakness – he always looks so smooth wherever he races and never seems to be riding on the edge, it's hard to tell how hard he really is trying."

And the others? "Jason now is thankfully starting to put two good races together and being consistent in races whereas at the start of the year was only really putting in one good race then a bad one but it seems like he's now conquered that.

"Jim is currently leading the Under 21 championship by a fair few points and hopefully will have the championship tied up at the final round at Torrington. He's started to put consistency into his racing also but needs to replicate that form in the Maxxis. The same

Factfile

Jason Dougan

Age: 19

Height: 5' 9"

Weight: 11st 6lbs

Favourite track: Sun City, South Africa

Marital status: Single

Best MX memory: Winning British champs overall at Culham when only 16

Hobbies: Minibikes and general riding

Mechanic: Phil Roe



Dougan joined the team in '06 after starting the season with RWJ



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Factfile

Jim Murro

Age: 19

Height: 5' 9"

Weight: 10st 7lbs

Favourite music: Anything but 'girly pop'

Hometown: Blackpool

Most respected rider: Stefan Everts

Mechanic: Steve Sankey



goes for Patrick – good speed in practice is all well and good but he needs to ride the same in larger events as he does in the smaller ones.”

With Carl taking the MX2 class down to the wire and Jim appearing to get a stranglehold on the U21 championship, 2006 is shaping up to be a successful year for the team.

“The season has been very good so far with Carl currently trailing by four points in the Maxxis so there's all to play for in the last round and hopefully he can retain his number one plate. As for Jim, he's got a decent lead in the Under 21s. It was unfortunate that Ben got injured but Neil Morgan [Moggstar owner] is more than happy seeing Jason running at the

front of the pack.

“So overall we've been happy with the way the season has gone and the lads have done pretty much what was expected of them, we couldn't really ask for much more. It's just a shame Ben broke his scaphoid early in the season and now Jason has also picked up an injury too as he was fast and seemed to be adjusting well to the bike considering how late into the season he joined us.”

After a disappointing start to his GP campaign Nunny put together a run of three podium finishes on the trot, good enough to earn him a big-bike ride for Team GB at the MX des Nations. And the prospect of watching Carl

take on the rest of the world on a 450F is one Mark's relishing.

“We've seen him ride a 450 and he looks very quick on one. It will be a change for him but good riders seem to go quick on anything they throw their leg over and I'm sure KTM will produce a very good machine for him.”

So with the very real prospect of two national titles in 2006 and some exciting developments for next year, Mark's got every reason to be optimistic.

“I'm looking forward to a good '07 – hopefully we can produce another good team that we can be proud of – and I'm also looking forward to the youth side.”

Factfile

Patrick Gilboy

Age: 19

Height: 5' 11"

Weight: 12st

Favourite track: Desertmartin

Best MX memory: BYMX win in 2003

Marital status: Single

Hobbies: Cycling

Mechanic: Michael Palmby



gp of belgium

Everts, with Coppins in hot pursuit, takes world title #10 at Namur



PERFECT 10!

Everts gets into double figures and Cairoli claws back points on Pourcel as the GP hardmen dodge the trees at Namur...

Words and photo by Alex Hodgkinson

WITH 98 GP overalls and a 10th world title beckoning, Stefan Everts rolls into Namur for the final time in his illustrious career with yet more records in his sights.

At the Citadel Stefan helps Liam celebrate his second birthday in the morning and in the afternoon the lad sees dad seal his 10th world title – but it's hardly a surprising outcome!

Stefan only needs to take one more point than Kevin Stribos to be crowned champion and, seeing as he's never lost an overall at the place, it doesn't seem to be asking too much of him. And his job's made a whole lot easier

when the Suzuki boy lands on a touring Cedric Melotte in free training, bruising his ribs and chipping a bone in his bum.

Kevin fights bravely to end the day fifth but Stefan steams past Melotte and clears off when Josh Coppins and Steve Ramon start to get too close in race one. And only the Kiwi can stay close in race two before the champ turns the screw at 25 minutes as usual.

Youthstream have got fences everywhere to keep the hordes back and their second wall of defence holds tight. But the usual celebrations fall flat in the chaos and the podium is as

orchestrated as Last Night of the Proms. Everyone's there of course – and Liam gets carted round the stage as usual – but I can't help feeling it would be more real if Harry and Kelly got a bit more of the limelight than Giuseppe and Wolfgang.

At least Eric Geboers comes up with a neat trophy – a globe fit for the king of the world – and Stefan stops sobbing for long enough to get at least one decent image of the whole show.

We've got fairly used to MX1 boiling down to Josh against the Belgians and that's the story of the top five but sixth place is in British hands –



Results - round 12

MX1

1	Stefan Everts	(Rinaldi Yamaha)	25+25=50
2	Josh Coppins	(CAS Honda)	22+22=44
3	Steve Ramon	(Team Suzuki)	20+20=40
4	Cedric Melotte	(Rinaldi Yamaha)	18+16=34
5	Kevin Stribos	(Team Suzuki)	13+18=31
6	Pascal Leuret	(Multitek Honda)	14+14=28
7	James Noble	(RWJ Honda)	10+15=25
8	Francisco Garcia Vico	(Honda)	12+12=24
9	Wyatt Avis	(KTM)	11+11=22
10	Manuel Priem	(Van Beers Yamaha)	8+13=21
11	Gordon Crockard	(Wulfspport Honda)	15+5=20
13	Ken De Dycker	(CAS Honda)	16+2=18

MX2

1	Antonio Cairoli	(De Carli Yamaha)	25+25=50
2	Christophe Pourcel	(GPKR Kawasaki)	20+22=42
3	Sebastien Pourcel	(GPKR Kawasaki)	18+16=34
4	Carl Nunn	(Champ KTM)	10+20=30
5	Rui Goncalves	(Silver Action KTM)	13+14=27
6	Manuel Monni	(KTM)	12+12=24
7	Marc De Reuver	(Champ KTM)	16+8=24
8	Tyla Ratray	(Champ KTM)	4+18=22
9	David Philippaerts	(Champ KTM)	22+0=22
10	Aigar Leok	(Van Beers Yamaha)	7+13=20
13	Billy MacKenzie	(Bike-It/Dixon Yamaha)	14+4=18
14	Gareth Swanepoel	(Molson Kawasaki)	0+15=15
20	Shaun Simpson	(Wulfspport Honda)	6+0=6

Gordy in race one, James Noble in race two and then Trevor Avery's French boy Pascal Leuret overall.

Noble's first moto is spoilt by a bad start but the Crock Star's on a mission in both motos with his first race charge promising even more until he gets sideways approaching the ornamental bridge. "That sort of thing slows you down round here," he admits.

The Ulsterman's second moto surge up the leaderboard ends abruptly when he misses Noble's front wheel and plants the Wulfspport Honda in the fence!

Down in MX2 David Philippaerts continues to be the hairiest man on the planet and is running away with moto one at Namur until he crashes.

His mate Tony Cairoli gratefully accepts the win and admits that he's not surprised. "David was riding too wild. He had to crash!" As if to prove the point, David then dumps his Toomer on the ground in the second moto even when he isn't leading as Cairoli adds another maximum score.

The Sicilian's double raises his title hopes but crafty Christophe Pourcel recovers well from

a fall to lose only eight on the day and remain on course to take the championship.

The battle of the Brits is won by Carl Nunn. Nunny doesn't enjoy race one but he actually makes Pourcel sweat for second in race two as he shortens his odds on that sixth in the series.

Billy Mac's challenge fades further with a below par day while Tommy Searle butts a tree in quali and doesn't make the race but Molson mate Swanny is methodically moving in on them all. TC (knocked out) and Jason Dougan (broken arm) are further casualties but Shaun Simpson takes a 15th to brighten his smile.

Josh Coppins

MX1 2-1

"What an unbelievable weekend. With such a bad start to the season I had to set new goals and one of them was to win a GP before the end of the year and I achieved that today. I have to say a big thank you to my team, CAS Honda and all our sponsors and the rest of the guys that have supported me in getting back onto the top of the podium."



PARTY POOPER!

Stefan Everts starts favourite at Desertmartin as he goes for his 100th GP win – but Josh Coppins hasn't read the script...

Words by Sean Lawless Photos by Suttty

Josh Coppins and Stefan Everts lead factory Suzuki duo Steve Ramon and Kevin Strijbos



Stefan Everts

MX1 1-2

"It has been a tough race today. The track was hard. The first race was exciting and in the second Josh was so fast. At one point I could not stay with him anymore and physically I was finished. I think that we had the same speed but he was a bit stronger so I decided to go for a safe second towards the end."



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Christophe Pourcel

MX2 3-4

"My goal this weekend was to keep at least my advantage over Cairoli and finally I scored more points than him so I'm happy. I didn't start so well in both heats but I found good lines in the first laps. I didn't want to take any risks here and that's the reason why I didn't win – the track had some nice jumps but it was too fast and dangerous and I never gave 100 per cent."

IT'S SUPPOSED to be a day when history is made. Stefan Everts, with his 10th world crown secured just a fortnight before, heads to Desertmartin for the Grand Prix of Northern Ireland with 99 overall GP wins to his name and the magic ton in his sights. But Josh Coppins is there to spoil the party.

Early on it's looking good for Everts. Despite slamming himself into a bank in Sunday morning's warm-up the Belgian slips ahead of early leader Coppins on lap five of the first MX1 moto and, after an electrifying race, takes the win.

"Stefan will make him pay for that in race two!" reckons an Everts supporter after Coppins doggedly hangs on to the rear wheel of the Rinaldi Yamaha for 15 laps. Ha! Choke on your chips frites fan – after another 35

minutes plus two laps of awesome MX1 action it's the CAS Honda rider who's dishing out the punishment!

From the start of the second MX1 moto it's Coppins who takes the lead with Everts breathing down his neck. But when Stefan moves to the front at around half-distance it looks as though the GP will go the way of the other 12 held so far this year – that's with Everts on the top step of the podium.

So when Josh regains the lead after following Everts' lines for three laps there's a sense of disbelief among the fans packing out the Porter's Pit venue. And the sense of disbelief gets even more, er, disbelieving when Coppins soaks up the pressure of having the #72 machine on his tail and then actually begins to pull away.

"After I passed Stefan in the second moto I started to pull a gap," grins Josh. "First it was three seconds, then four, five and then nine seconds. After nine seconds I knew there was no way he could come back so I just kept pushing and was so happy to win!"

Surprisingly, at the post-race press conference Everts is relaxed and smiling – despite having just seen his chance of an unbeaten season evaporate into the Irish air. Could this be because the next GP is at Lierop, one of his favourite tracks? "I am happy for Josh, he has been working hard for this. Of course I am a bit disappointed to lose but I still have two more chances to reach 100."

Third place on the podium goes to Ken De Dycker. After a slow start to the opening moto the big Belgian carves his way through

Neville Bradshaw

MX1 17-15

"The first race was pretty hard and starting from so far out it was hard to get a good start. I battled at the beginning to get a good rhythm but I finished 17th. The second race I also had a bad start but I came through to 15th so I scored some points which was good."



David Philippaerts

MX2 7-3

"I had a bad night Saturday because I had a stomach ache and was sick. I had a lot of pain today and this did not help my concentration. I crashed on the first lap and it was very hard to come back but seventh place was okay. I was quite happy with my speed but Tyla was so fast today, I think going to America helped him!"



Mark Jones

MX1 15-DNF

"I was happy with qualifying yesterday and first race I got an all right start and worked my way through to 15th so I was pleased with that. The second I got a pretty good jump and worked my way up to eighth but then I hit a rock at the bottom of a hill, it spat me up the bank and I stalled the bike and couldn't start it so I was a bit disappointed with that."



James Noble

MX1 DNF-9

"The track got very rough and there were a lot of big crashes today, especially though those whoops at the bottom. The first race I struggled a lot – I crashed on the first lap, got back up into the points and then crashed again. For the second race we changed the set-up and it was 100 per cent better."



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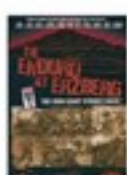
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from 14th after the first lap up to third on lap eight and follows this with fourth in race two behind Spanish KTM pilot Jonathan Barragan.

Over in MX2, the class that normally provides the GP excitement quota, the first moto is a bit of a yawnfest. Tyla Ratray holeshots before Sebastien Pourcel gets by but once Styla's back in the lead on lap two he motors away and even finds time to crash and still win by nearly eight seconds from defending champ Tony Cairoli.

At one point Cairoli, who's playing catch-up to Christophe Pourcel in the championship standings, looks set to take a big bite out of the French teenager's series lead. But the

18-year-old advances up the leaderboard to finish third at the flag.

Race two is even more cut and dried with Ratray getting by holeshotter Cairoli and leading every lap, finally coming home a whopping 20 seconds ahead of his second-placed Champ KTM team-mate Marc De Reuver. Cairoli, second after the opening lap, again looks set to close in on the championship leader but an early crash dumps him back into the chasing pack and he can only fight his way back up to seventh.

In what is, in effect, a second home GP for the Brits there's little reason to be cheerful for the fans who turn out to cheer them on.

Easily best of the bunch in MX1 is Gordon Crockard who, despite clouting his ankle early in race one, still brings the Wulfsport Honda home in fifth. Race two ends prematurely when after gating in the leading handful of riders he goes down hard entering a left-hander. After pitting for repairs he rejoins the race but he's hopelessly out of the points and retires at half-distance, his first race result still good enough to crack the top-10 overall.

James Noble DNFs the opener after a first lap crash followed by a second fall late on dumps him down the leaderboard but the RWJ Honda rider recovers to nab a ninth second time out for 13th on the day.

Gareth Swanepoel

MX2 9-6

"The first race I was ninth – I came through really well and then got tired so I dropped back. The second race I came through to fifth but unfortunately Pourcel got me on the last corner. I've had a little bit of flu this weekend so I wasn't feeling as strong as normal."



Tommy Searle

MX2 11-DNF

"The first race I was riding good but in the second turn there was a big pile-up and I got stuck behind that and was pretty much last. But I came through to 11th and got past Billy and Carl so that was good. In the second race I got a real good jump and if I'd made it out of the first turn I would have been third or fourth but Gundersen hit me. He didn't turn how I thought he would and I was turning quite a lot and we hit and then he got hit by someone else and that forced us both into the bank."



Wayne Smith

MX1 14-18

"Best weekend of the year so far for me! I was hoping for a repeat performance of 2004 in Ireland when I holeshot the MX1 class but it didn't quite go to plan but I'm still over the moon with the way I've ridden. I feel like I've turned my season around a bit – up to now I've had lots of problems but today I've had two point-scoring rides. The bike's virtually bog-stock – just a different pipe and suspension and she's working awesome."



Jonathan Barragan

MX1 8-3

"The first race was a disaster. I had a crash which dropped me back and then I had to finish the moto without a clutch. The second moto was much better and I did not have any problems. I was chasing De Dycker for a while and in the last 10 minutes I was stronger. His pace was fast to begin with but then he started to slow down."

Gordon Crockard

MX1 5-DNF

"The first 10 minutes of the first race there was quite a lot of action – in the big whoop section down the back I managed to get all out of shape and somehow really hurt my ankle. After that I tried to stay with Strijbos, accepted I wasn't going to catch him and went into enduro mode and saw the race out in fifth. I iced my ankle between races, duct taped it up and got a good start in the second moto. Coming down into the turn by the pit lane Barragan jumped to the right in front of me so I had to jump to the right and completely washed out and went down like a sack of spuds. But I've had a good weekend – compared to last year we're talking a totally different sport!"



Antonio Cairoli

MX2 2-7

"I am not so happy because I wanted to take points away from Pourcel today. I made a stupid mistake and crashed in the second heat, losing a lot of time in picking up the bike and restarting. I did not have a good feeling out there and had to use a lot of energy to push hard."



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Tyla Rattray
MX2 1-1

"In the first moto I got the holeshot which I was really happy about. Sebastien Pourcel passed me but after about a lap I got him back. I upped my pace and eventually made a gap. I had a pretty big crash at one stage and scared myself a bit. Luckily the bike was still running and I could pick it up right away and get going and keep the lead. In the second moto I again got into the lead on the first lap and put my head down. I pushed hard to breakaway from Marc in second. Overall it was a good day. I feel that I am back to 100 per cent with my riding and my fitness."



Billy MacKenzie
MX2 16-9

"After about six or seven laps in the first race my arms started to pump and I lost touch with the front half of the top 10. I then had a fight with Tommy Searle and tried a last gasp, last lap attempt to pass him but it didn't work and I went down. I got a lot better start in the second race and held a pace with the front guys for a while but then had a big front end slide over a step-up and crashed pretty hard. I could not have tried any harder this weekend and my lap times only dropped when I had stiffened up."

Carl Nunn
MX2 13-DNF

"I struggled in the first race and rode badly. I couldn't understand it because normally I love this place. We had made a small change to the bike from the setting I had here in the British championship and we reverted back to the set-up we had then. The second race was better and I felt good. Gareth Swanepoel came past but I stuck with him and we were catching Pourcel when the bike stopped."



Tom Church
MX2 27-16

"I didn't ride very well at all today. I don't know why. The track was difficult and maybe I am just not ready to really hang it out yet. I rode pretty stiff but managed to get some points in the second race."



Motovision Suzuki's South African rider Nev Bradshaw posts a 17-15 card for 17th overall, one place ahead of Wayne Smith who can't even get a guaranteed GP start but is fast enough to go 14-18 after trading his more familiar two-fiddy four-popper for a 450F. And Wayner's PAR Homes Honda team-mate Mark Jones also gets in the points thanks to a race one 15th and it could have been even better if he hadn't stalled at half-distance while running eighth.

MX2's been a happy hunting ground for the Brits in this year's GP series but Desertmartin's a big fat disappointment for all the Maxxis

regulars with the exception of Molson Kawasaki's Gareth Swanepoel who ends the day in eighth with a 9-6 card.

Billy Mac's won a GP this season but the Scot can only manage 10th overall after suffering arm-pump in the opener and then falling attempting a last-lap pass on Tommy Searle. Race two's better for Billy but he still only gets ninth after crashing.

After getting caught up in a first lap crash with David Philippaerts and Marc De Reuver in the opening moto, Searle gets his head down and comes from dead last to pass Billy Mac and Carl Nunn for 11th but he gets tangled in the

first corner pile-up in race two and pulls in after seven laps with a bent rear brake disc.

Nunny, after a lowly 13th in the opening race, is looking good for a better finish second time out until his Champ KTM nips up on lap 13 when he's holding seventh. And even the normally pretty chipper Tom Church is down in the dumps after scoring just five points for a race two 16th.

At least Martin Barr, Billy's Bike-It Dixon Yamaha team-mate, has got a smile on his face after qualifying for the first time all season in the MX2 division and scoring with 18th in race two.

Results - round 13

MX1

1	Josh Coppins	(CAS Honda)	22+25=47
2	Stefan Everts	(Rinaldi Yamaha)	25+22=47
3	Ken De Dycker	(CAS Honda)	20+18=38
4	Kevin Strijbos	(Team Suzuki)	18+16=34
5	Jonathan Barragan	(Red Bull KTM)	13+20=33
6	Manuel Priem	(Van Beers Yamaha)	14+15=29
7	Kornel Nemeth	(Kurz Suzuki)	15+14=29
8	Antti Pyrhonen	(TM)	12+11=23
9	Tanel Leok	(Motorex Kawasaki)	9+13=22
10	Gordon Crockard	(Wulfsport Honda)	16+0=16
13	James Noble	(RWJ Honda)	0+12=12
17	Neville Bradshaw	(Motovision Suzuki)	4+6=10
18	Wayne Smith	(PAR Homes Honda)	7+3=10
21	Mark Jones	(PAR Homes Honda)	6+0=6

MX2

1	Tyla Rattray	(Champ KTM)	25+25=50
2	Christophe Pourcel	(GPKR Kawasaki)	20+18=38
3	Antonio Cairoli	(De Carli Yamaha)	22+14=36
4	Marc De Reuver	(Champ KTM)	13+22=35
5	David Philippaerts	(Champ KTM)	14+20=34
6	Sebastien Pourcel	(GPKR Kawasaki)	16+16=32
7	Rui Goncalves	(Silver Action KTM)	18+13=31
8	Gareth Swanepoel	(Molson Kawasaki)	12+15=27
9	Aigar Leok	(Van Beers Yamaha)	11+10=21
10	Billy MacKenzie	(Bike-It/Dixon Yamaha)	5+12=17
15	Tommy Searle	(Molson Kawasaki)	10+0=10
16	Martin Kohut	(Wulfsport Honda)	0+9=9
18	Carl Nunn	(Champ KTM)	8+0=8
21	Tom Church	(Molson Kawasaki)	0+5=5
22	Martin Barr	(Bike-It/Dixon Yamaha)	0+3=3



Martin Barr
MX2 DNF-18

"It's not been too bad today, I'm just real happy I qualified for the first time in MX2. First race didn't go to plan - I got a good start and then four or five laps in I had some bike problems when it kept on cutting out and I had a few moments over jumps so I pulled out. I didn't get so good a start in the second, then I made a few mistakes and the pack got away but a couple of riders crashed and I got back into the points."

Results - round 14

MX1

1	Stefan Everts	(Rinaldi Yamaha)	25+25=50
2	Josh Coppins	(CAS Honda)	22+22=44
3	Steve Ramon	(Team Suzuki)	20+16=36
4	Kevin Strijbos	(Team Suzuki)	15+18=33
5	Jonathan Barragan	(Red Bull KTM)	12+20=32
6	Manuel Priem	(Van Beers Yamaha)	13+15=28
7	Bas Verhoeven	(Kawasaki)	14+11=25
8	Ken De Dycker	(CAS Honda)	16+9=25
9	Lauris Freibergs	(Suzuki)	6+13=19
10	Kornel Nemeth	(Kurz Suzuki)	7+12=19
17	Mark Jones	(PAR Homes Honda)	0+10=10
21	James Noble	(RWJ Honda)	2+2=4

MX2

1	Christophe Pourcel	(GPKR Kawasaki)	20+25=45
2	Antonio Cairoli	(De Carli Yamaha)	25+20=45
3	Tyla Rattray	(Champ KTM)	22+22=44
4	Rui Goncalves	(Silver Action KTM)	15+18=33
5	Tommy Searle	(Molson Kawasaki)	18+14=32
6	Aigar Leok	(Van Beers Yamaha)	16+15=31
7	Carl Nunn	(Champ KTM)	12+16=28
8	Max Nagl	(KTM)	14+10=24
9	Marcus Schiffer	(KTM)	9+13=22
10	Matti Seistola	(Honda)	10+12=22
18	Gareth Swanepoel	(Molson Kawasaki)	8+0=8
20	Wayne Smith	(PAR Homes Honda)	5+1=6
24	Tom Church	(Molson Kawasaki)	0+2=2

Series standings

MX1

1 Everts 689 points, 2 Strijbos 491, 3 Ramon 454, 4 De Dycker 434, 5 Leok 405, 6 Barragan 338, 7 Coppins 293, 8 Priem 267, 9 Leuret 247, 10 Melotte 224, 11 Noble 202...
13 Bill 167...15 Crockard 153...27 Sword 40...
31 Jones 29...34 Bradshaw 23...
39 Hucklebridge 15...42 Smith 10

MX2

1 C Pourcel 541 points, 2 Cairoli 513, 3 Rattray 446, 4 Philippaerts 440, 5 De Reuver 373, 6 Nunn 343, 7 Goncalves 300, 8 Searle 296, 9 S Pourcel 291, 10 Swanepoel 286, 11 MacKenzie 281...26 Church 40, 27 Dougan 36...32 Kohut 17, 33 Simpson 17...45 Smith 6, 46 Anderson 5...56 Rowson 3, 57 Barr 3

Ken De Dycker loses ground on Steve Ramon in the battle for bronze

TON UP!

gp of holland

Everts hits the magic 100 and Pourcel pulls away from Cairoli as the '06 world championships stop off at Lierop

Words and photos by Alex Hodgkinson

AFTER THE disappointment of missing out on his 100th GP overall in Northern Ireland, Stefan Everts must surely fancy his chances of hitting the ton at round 14 of the series in the Dutch sand of Lierop.

And sure enough the record-breaking champ adds another record to his, er, record with two wins as he underlines his position as the most successful GP rider in the history of the sport.

To be fair, Josh Coppins knows he doesn't have a cat in hell's chance of beating Stefan in the soft stuff but he's chuffed to bits with second after "beating all the other Belgians!"...

One of those is, of course, Josh's CAS Honda team-mate Ken De Dycker. Neil Prince and the boys have been out with the big Belgly all week practising starts and the Kayaba rear linkage lock seems to help in practice. And a phenomenal first lap-and-a-half in the opening moto sees him even pass Josh for a short-lived second.

Josh shakes his head – "he was never going to keep that up" – but team owner Harry Ainsworth is less amused as the CAS squad chase third in the series with Ken. "What did the big soft **** think he was doing, trying to catch Stefan as well?"

At the finish of the race a knackered Ken is fifth and has lost another four points to Ramon who's on a damage limitation run with his Irish injuries. And another seven points down the drain in race two virtually assures a Suzuki 2-3 in the series.

Even without Josh on his rear wheel Stefan laps sixth in race two and the fans are staying

behind the fence as he comes in to win #100. All of the regular snappers are playing fair so we all get the shot until a fat ****k from the Finnish federation strolls into the track and spoils it for everyone else.

The regular true Brits might as well not have been in Lierop with Noble having a shocker and Gordy out at turn two. "My ankle swelled up after Desertmartin and I nearly didn't come here. I wish I hadn't now. I'm riding round like a **** – I landed on my arm yesterday and then I clipped Pyrhonen's rear wheel after gating fourth." So the Crock Star withdraws for the day to stay healthy for Hawkstone.

Guess who leads MX2 until he crashes? Yep, Philippaerts again. He sees off Cairoli until he comes round a blind turn to find Swedish backmarker Jonas Wing stretched out over half the track, his bike over the rest. DP grabs the front brake and nosedives. And then he dumps his Toomer on the ground in the second moto to hand third in the series back to Styla.

The South African is twice second but is not enjoying life. "I decided to use tear-offs in race one and all 28 came off at once. It's no fun trying to pass without goggles in wet sand." In race two he knackers himself going for a pass on Pourcel for the win.

Tyla's Champ KTM team-mate Marc De Reuver – usually a good bet for a podium in sand – has his tongue hanging out after 15 minutes in his home GP and doesn't score a point.

Cairoli and Pourcel share top points on the day with a win and a third each even though

they never race head-to-head all day.

Heading for the final round at Ernee 28 points down, Tony is realistic. "The title is far now. All I can do is to try to win in France." And Christophe, winning for only the second time all summer, is confident. "I have been managing my advantage all season. Now I have to finish it off at Ernee."

The fight to finish top Brit in the series is effectively decided by the end of the day. Nunny is again superb in race two after a so-so first moto but crashes leave Billy Mac pointless after he runs top six both times to at least show the speed is back.

Tommy Searle dented his chances of toppling Nunny in the world rankings back at Namur but is back at his fiery best in Holland, leading both motos away and hanging in for 32 points. Molson mate Swanny is less happy there – the South African has gradually pulled himself into the fight for best Brit until his engine konks.

But the battle at Ernee for seventh in the world between Tommy Gun, Swanny, Billy, Rui Goncalves and Seb Pourcel should be red hot.

The dwindling British ranks are reinforced by Wayne and Mark – alias Smith and Jones – at Lierop as the PAR Homes boys get another weekend off from home competition. And don't the boys do well! Brains nearly breaks top 10 in MX1, Wayner's second Honda home in the MX2 race he doesn't crash in and team boss Paul Rowlands is all smiles, hoping he can get the pair into MX1 at Ernee and Steven Clarke into MX2. We hope so too...

Tommy Gun takes fifth at Lierop



Stefan and Liam celebrate 100 GP wins



Results

WTC

1	Albert Cabestany	(Sherco Tarragona)	3+4+1=8
2	Takahisa Fujinami	(Repsol Montesa HRC)	8+10+0=18
3	Adam Raga	(Gas Gas Trial)	10+8+0=18
4	Dougie Lampkin	(Repsol Montesa HRC)	10+6+3=19
5	Jeroni Fajardo	(Gas Gas Trial)	12+12+4=28
6	Toni Bou	(Beta)	15+27+1=43
7	Marc Freixa	(RFME Beta)	23+32+5=60
8	Tadeusz Blazusiak	(Scorpa)	34+33+2=69
9	Shaun Morris	(Prolec Gas Gas)	44+37+0=81
10	James Dabill	(Top Trial Team Beta)	40+42+4=86

Series standings

WTC

1 Raga 181 points, 2 Fujinami 171, 3 Cabestany 160, 4 Lampkin 159, 5 Bou 145, 6 Fajardo 120, 7 Freixa 96, 8 Blazusiak 76, 9 Dabill 72, 10 Morris 48...22 Jarvis 6...24 Phillipson 4

Junior

1 Gilbert 179 points, 2 Oliveras 176, 3 Brown 172, 4 Gontard 121, 5 Iolitta 113...9 Ely 49...14 Doyle 19...19 Fry 7...27 Marshall 2

Youth

1 Gubian 163 points, 2 Wigg 158, 3 Grattarola 156, 4 Gomez 130, 5 Sampson 105, 6 Danby 100...8 Haslam 86...12 Andrews 40...16 Ellwood 23...20 Robinson 5...22 Jones 3...25 Crellin 2

HIGH TIMES!

At 2000 metres above sea level the Andorran round of the WTC tests bikes and riders – and it's Albert Cabestany who rises to the occasion

Words by g2f.co.uk Photos by Eric Kitchen

THE PENULTIMATE round of the 2006 WTC sees Albert Cabestany romp to a very convincing win at the Grand Prix of Andorra in a trial that's much easier than usually staged at this mountain venue.

Takahisa Fujinami takes the runner-up spot but only after he's defeated current series leader Adam Raga on a tie-breaker with the '04 world champ notching up four more cleans during the course of the trial.

Dougie Lampkin is fuming at the finish. After recording the second best score on observation he's demoted to fourth place due to time penalties. And the reason he's so angry? The three minutes he's late are due to the trial being stopped twice and not because of his poor scheduling.

"Fourth place again," says Dougie, "but this time I'm happy with the way I rode, just not with the result. I really needed to ride well here to restore my confidence after my recent run of

poor results and after today I know again that I can be on the pace with the rest of the top guys.

"I'm gutted over the time issue as we were told we'd get extra time after having waited while they made a decision to scrap section 10 on the first lap. We should have been given extra time as we had to wait late on the second lap while they removed an injured rider from one of the sections. Without the time penalties I would have been second and still would have held on to third in the championship – now it all comes down to the final round in Belgium."

Raga now looks odds-on favourite to lift his second successive outdoor crown to add to his tally of four indoor titles with the factory Gas Gas rider taking a 10-point lead over Fujinami to the last round that will be hosted at the famous Belgian racing circuit of Spa-Francorchamps.

Raga confirms his strong position. "Today

has not been ideal as I had a problem in section three on the first lap when the observer gave me a five. Without this error I would have been closer to Albert and in front of Fujinami. The trial has been too easy today so there was no chance to recover from any mistake.

"Anyway, we are now late in the championship and the fight at each trial is tough so to have a 10-point advantage with just one round to go is a position I am both happy and confident with."

With the top section on the course being located at over 2000 metres above sea level, the GP of Andorra is easily the highest round of the season and creates all the usual problems associated with running combustion engines where there is a distinct lack of air. Victorious Cabestany acknowledges this point during the post event press conference.

"As we know, this is a very difficult race due to the high altitude. To have a good bike at this



level takes a lot of preparation and hard work and for that reason I would like to thank my team for their incredible efforts.

"As for my part, again I have shown what I am capable of but to be nearer to the top of the championship I must find this kind of performance in every round, that point is clear. Now I hope I can at least take third place in the series."

With Raga and Fujinami pretty much clear of the rest, the focus in Belgium will now be on the scrap between Albert and Dougie for the #3 place.

Although he only has an outside chance of taking the title Takahisa confirms that the championship battle is not over quite yet. "I have to be happy with second position today. Okay, it would have been nice to have continued my run of victories but the truth is that Cabestany was too strong for all of us. This is always a difficult trial because of the

problems we have with the altitude but my bike worked well and with the sections not being too tough it has not been that physically demanding.

"Maybe 10 points is too many to close on Raga with only one round to go but all I can do is fight for the victory again and see what happens after that."

Shaun Morris and James Dabill finish ninth and 10th respectively to make it three Brits in the top 10 in a trial that does not suit the homeboys very well at all. With the exception of the four opening sections which are set in a narrow, steep stream and that are among the easiest on the lap, the remaining hazards feature nothing but dry, dusty boulders of varying scales.

Dabill begins well on both laps but fades each time as he struggles to cope with the extreme altitude. The youngster from Leeds knows that he will need a much improved

performance at the last round if he is to snatch eighth place in the standings off Polish rider Tadeusz Blazusiak as the more experienced campaigner currently holds a four-point advantage over him.

In the Junior class Michael Brown keeps his title hopes alive with a battling third place but only a victory in Spa will give him the chance to overhaul the Spanish pairing of Daniel Gibert and Daniel Oliveras who sit above him in the table.

A British winner in the 125 category also remains a very real possibility with Alexz Wigg holding a virtual three-point lead going to the final showdown thanks to his second place in Andorra.

Both of the supporting championships are difficult to call as with the riders being allowed to drop their two worst results, the points variations are complicated and endless. So it's very much a case of watch this space.

DK OK!

Knighter makes it two world crowns on the trot as his perfect season continues

Words & photos by Jonty Edmunds

BRITAIN'S NUMBER one enduro rider David Knight is the '06 World E3 Champion. The most dominant rider in this year's WEC series, Knighter clinches his second world crown in style at the GP of Slovakia with yet another double E3 class win.

"It's great to know that I'm world champion again," comments Knight, surrounded by his factory KTM team. "This season has been incredible. I set out to win every day of the championship and so far that's what I've done. I've enjoyed every minute of this year's world championship. Now I can relax a little bit before I start getting myself ready for a year in the US."

Needing just a handful of points to clinch the E3 title before the final round of the series in France, DK does exactly what he's done at each and every world championship event this year – that's comfortably win both days. And he also finishes as the fastest overall rider.

"I worked really hard at the beginning of the season to make sure I was ready for this year," explains David. "Finishing first on both days in Sweden set me up for the season and since then I've just tried to keep on winning."

Determined to claim the runner-up spot in

the E3 championship, French Gas Gas rider Seb Guillaume places as runner-up to Knight on day one, beating DK's factory KTM team-mate Marko Tarkkala in the process. Splitting the two Austrian four-strokes, Guillaume strengthens his runner-up spot in the championship even though Tarkkala demotes him to third on day two.

With Knight the only senior class rider to win a world title in Slovakia, his KTM team-mates Ivan Cervantes and Samuli Aro ensure that in France they should be joining in on the championship celebrations. Topping the E1 class on both days, Cervantes shows exactly why he's on course to net his second world title. Aro fails to win on either day but his main aim is to reach the finish without incident or accident and he now only needs to finish inside the points in France to claim the E2 title.

Unable to catch Cervantes on either day it's the usual three riders that battle it out for the remaining podium positions in E1 as Italians Alessandro Belometti and Simone Albergoni compete against Pole Bartosz Oblucki with Belometti just edging ahead of Albergoni to make it a KTM one-two. Split by just two seconds, the Italian duo trade blows



Unbeaten – and seemingly unbeatable – David Knight has been the dominant force in the '06 WEC





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throughout the day while Oblucki places just six seconds adrift in fourth.

Day two sees a result reversal for the two Italians as Albergoni makes the most of a mistake by Belometti who has to work hard to finish third. Separated by 20 seconds, neither rider troubles Cervantes as the Spaniard wins day two by over one minute.

"I was expecting to be nervous this weekend but I felt so relaxed, I can't believe how well I have ridden," says Ivan. "I felt so good on my bike that the times in the special tests came easily. I didn't make any mistakes all weekend and now I have a really good lead going into the last race of the championship."

Putting his disastrous US GP performance behind him, Stefan Merriman records his third E2 class victory of the year on day one in Slovakia, finishing 33 seconds ahead of his Yamaha team-mate Johnny Aubert. With the three special tests clearly to his liking Stefan steadily edges ahead during the opening day having won six tests in the E2 class. Placing third, less than one second ahead of Mika Ahola, Aro rounds off the podium having failed to win a single test.

"It certainly feels good to win again," admits Stefan. "I've really enjoyed the event and on day one I felt really good. The tests were more

traditional which suited me. I just felt really comfortable and was able to relax on the tests."

But on the second day's rougher tests it's Aubert who puts his more aggressive motocross style to good use to gain the upper hand. Topping six of the day's tests the WEC rookie places 18 seconds clear at the top of the class and equals Merriman's three E2 class day wins.

"Stefan was too fast on day one and I couldn't beat him," admits Aubert. "But on day two I was able to push harder. I don't know why exactly but I seem to be able to ride faster on the second day. I knew after the first special test that I could win so I pushed hard and everything went well."

With Merriman dropping to second Aro again places third. Disappointed with the way he has ridden he is also pleased to be sitting in the E2 championship driving seat. "I didn't ride well but I guess two podium finishes were exactly what I needed. I'm 32 points ahead now so I guess the pressure is off a bit now."

Competing in the E2 class in Slovakia, Brits Euan McConnell and Daryl Bolter have a frustrating weekend with Euan just managing to make it into the points while Bolter crashes out on day one.

Struggling to get to grips with the Slovakian



Samuli Aro moves to within striking distance of the E2 title

WEC Series standings

E1

- 1 Cervantes 338 points,
- 2 Albergoni 296,
- 3 Belometti 254,
- 4 Oblucki 244,
- 5 Micheluz 222

E2

- 1 Aro 315 points,
- 2 Ahola 283,
- 3 Merriman 278,
- 4 Aubert 277,
- 5 Planet 202...
- 12 McConnell 84...
- 14 Edmondson 74

E3

- 1 Knight 350 points,
- 2 Guillaume 275,
- 3 Tarkkala 258,
- 4 Carlsson 256,
- 5 Kehr 209

EJ

- 1 Ljunggren 301,
- 2 Stapleton 287,
- 3 Bourgeois 252,
- 4 Mena 216,
- 5 Szuster 184...
- 17 Wakely 47



Stefan Merriman finds his form in Slovakia



Johnny Aubert puts his MX skills to good use



Joakim Ljunggren celebrates clinching the EJ title

special test, Euan's day one result takes a turn for the worse when he accidentally clocks in one minute early. Dropping to 18th in class, the Scot isn't impressed. And on day two things don't get any better as he only manages to finish one spot higher.

Missing from WEC competition all season due to wrist surgery early in the year, Bolter knows that he needs to impress his CH Racing Husqvarna team. Giving the opening day his all Daryl crashes heavily on the enduro test and spends the night in hospital having been diagnosed with a partially dislocated left hip.

Joining Knighter in becoming a world champion in Slovakia is Swede Joakim Ljunggren who pilots his Husaberg to the Enduro Junior title with a runner-up finish on day two. Also finishing as runner-up on day one when he is beaten by French rider Marc Bourgeois, on day two Ljunggren battles to the very last special test with Jake Stapleton and although Stapleton and his TM claim the win Ljunggren does enough to take the EJ world title.

"It's such a great feeling knowing that I have won the championship. I missed most of last season with a wrist injury so to have such a good season this year really makes up for it."



CLOSE ENCOUNTERS!

Big Ken comes close to lifting the MX1 crown a round early while over in MX2 it's too close to call between Nunn and Searle...

Words and photos by Toby Fuller

IT'S JUST about done and dusted in MX1 with big Ken De Dycker so close to clinching the British title at his first attempt after round seven of the series at Wakes Colne. Only four points from the final round at Hawkstone will allow the elongated Belgian to take the number one plate from his CAS Honda team-mate Josh Coppins – although, since his return from injury, Lizzard's been the fastest man on the track.

But it's a different story down in MX2 as new kid on the block Tommy Searle races at Wakes for the first time with the red series leader's plate after nicking it off Carl Nunn at Whitby. But hang on – Nunn wants it back and there's

another spanner in the works in the shape of Bike-It Dixon Yamaha rider Billy Mackenzie (who's also had his mitts on the red plate this year).

Wakes Colne had many critics last time round but the Halstead club has called in MX's answer to Bob the Builder – that's Johnny Douglas-Hamilton – to revamp the track. So can he fix it? Yes he can!

With the circuit running in a reverse direction and new profiles to the jumps the new-look Wakes Colne seems to go down well – although heavy overnight rain makes for interesting track conditions. We're talking porridge to start off

before turning out rough, rutted, technical and damn near prime!

Coppins puts in the fastest lap time in qualification to come in 2.4 seconds ahead of team-mate De Dycker with Hondas filling out the rest of the top five in the hands of James Noble, Gordon Crockard and Mark Jones.

And there's a similar pattern come the end of race one with red bikes filling out the top five. De Dycker's a man on a mission to prove he's a worthy champion elect and passes Coppins early on – although he gets passed back almost immediately.

Noble's not having the best of days and

First corner mayhem with Nunny (#1) sneaking up the inside of Billy Mac (#211), Brad Anderson (#4), Martin Barr (#50) and Tom Church (#22)



crashes back from third to fifth, dropping a handful of valuable points. Noble's crash gifts third to Gordy and despite his admission of not enjoying the going and new lay-out he's happy enough to take the podium finish when it's offered him – although GC's still aiming for the top step before the season's finished.

Race two is another Honda benefit with Coppins and De Dycker having an early battle until the Kiwi does another disappearing act in the much improved and drier conditions. The race turns out to be a carbon copy of the first with Crockard, Jones and Noble doing their bit in the major placings.

The MX2 class is the one not to be missed and is full of incident in both motos. In the opener, current – and confident – series leader Tommy Searle starts the day with a nine-point advantage but maybe he's feeling the pressure a tad as he goes down early on. Nunny also hits the deck but the EA KTM man wastes little time in remounting before reeling in Billy Mac – who's struggling with bike set-up – to win by a comfortable margin while the Molson Kawasaki rider fights back for third.

MacKenzie gets a dream start in race two as Searle hits the gate and follows that up with a role in the first turn melee while Nunny gets

taken out by the wayward Pioneer Yamaha of Brad Anderson!

Billy's made some set-up changes after the opener and is right on it, setting a fast pace out front on his own. Nunny and Tommy Gun work their way back through the pack at a rapid rate and the defending champ is soon back up to second. Okay, so he hasn't got the speed to catch the runaway leader but he's got enough to keep the hard-charging Searle at bay.

So roll on September 10 and Hawkstone Park – MX1 may be a mere formality now but the MX2 division should go right down to the wire...

TOMMY SEARLE
MX2 2-3

"First race I was third out the start and was doing well, passed Carl and got into second early on. Only on lap three we were into back-markers – a marker was in my line and I had to go into the slush which put me off the track and into the ropes.

It took me a while to get back going but I was happy to get second and set the fastest lap time. "I was looking forward to the next one but hit the gate then crashed in the first turn so I was dead last and came through to third. "I'm now four points ahead going into the last round so two wins at Hawkstone and no-one is going to be able to catch me!"



BILLY MACKENZIE
MX2 3-1

"The first race was not good as I got massive arm pump and the bike was not handling like I wanted it to – it was like the worst race I've ever had! We thought the track was going to be hardpack settings and then the rain came down and we didn't have enough time to change it.

"So we changed the settings for race two and the bike was just absolutely perfect and it was the most fun I've had racing since I broke my hand. I'm hoping this is the turn around and I can start winning some more races again.

"The track was good and loads better, a big improvement. We need other tracks to follow suit with a makeover and then we'll have one of the best championships."



CARL NUNN
MX2 1-2

"It rained all night and I was quite excited about it really. In the first race I got the holeshot but then ran wide and got covered in mud. I made a mistake on the first lap and went down – when I got up I was still in third which I was quite shocked about so we must have had a big gap over the rest already. I reeled Tommy back in quite quickly and put some pressure on him and he ended up making a mistake and then set my sights on Billy. I caught and passed him and then just rode my own race from there which was quite cool.

"The second race I got the holeshot again. Billy came past then I made a mistake in the whoops and Anderson came by me, went over the handlebars and his bike bounced into me and pushed me off the track – I was between his bike and a post. I didn't go down but I lost a lot of places. I just set my sights on Church and Swanepoel and got past them but Billy was too far gone to catch.

"The track was good and I enjoyed it – the only problem is the back markers. We say it every week but there just doesn't seem to be any blue flags!"

JAMES NOBLE
MX1 5-5

"It was a terrible day. Qualifying didn't go too bad but I was riding too tense and was fighting with the ruts and not flowing through the turns. My speed wasn't too bad but, after two offs, once you lose the leaders there's no way you'll catch back up round here."



BRAD ANDERSON
MX2 7-6

"I got out the gate with this new DEP pipe, it was real good. I was a bit unlucky with my adjuster clutch and was riding over the berms so I ended up crashing when I was third and ended up seventh so I wasn't very pleased with that.

"Second race the bike was going awesome and I got another good gate but then first lap I went past Nunny over the whoops, the front end dug in and spat me over the bars. I got up in 23rd and came back to seventh, then Martin Barr took me down so I had to fight back to sixth. I was pleased with that race – the speed was there, just unlucky in coming off otherwise I think I would've been top three in that one."

SHAUN SIMPSON MX2 5-5

"In the first race I hit the gate which didn't work out too bad as I sneaked up on the inside on the first corner and came out top 10. I rode smooth and tagged on to Swanepoel and finished fifth so I was happy with that.

"Second moto I hit the gate again – I saw Tommy move so I went as well. I then hit Willet round the first corner and I went down, caught my way back up to fifth but the leaders were gone.

"The track was mega, the jumps were nice and there were three or four lines in every corner."



JOSH COPPINS MX1 1-1

"I rode the track in 2004 and to be honest I didn't really enjoy it but Johnny Douglas Hamilton and the organizers made some awesome changes and considering all the rain we had they did a brilliant job. The practice sessions and first moto were a bit

muddy which made it quite technical but I still grabbed two holeshots and managed to control the race after having a good battle with Ken.

"The track was really difficult today so the first few laps I just tried to ride my own speed and find some good lines and then started to put the pace down to try and maintain some good lap times."



KEN DE DYCKER MX1 2-2

"The first race was pretty good, I was behind Josh at the beginning and took him then he passed me back

again – then there were too many slower riders and he pulled away and that was it.

"Had a good start in the second then made a mistake and he passed me again but then we came into the lapped riders and it was tricky and dangerous."



TOM CHURCH MX2 6-4

"It's just a good feeling for me to be out there and getting right in amongst it again to be honest.

The last few weeks have been going good and I'm conscious of the fact that my general form has been getting better and better.

"My confidence is getting higher – today was a solid day so I'm happy."



GORDON CROCKARD MX1 3-3

"First race I rode really badly for about four laps – I don't know why but I was riding tense. Mark Jones and Noble got by me but then I started to get into my groove and started to catch up and got back past Jonesy and very conveniently Noble crashed on the same lap which put me into third. I didn't enjoy the race, I don't like the particular dirt here and I find it hard to get into a good rhythm.

"The second race I gated into third and really wanted to go with the front two but didn't have their speed and was riding tense again but I'm in one piece with two podiums so that'll do me."



Results - round seven

MX1

1	Josh Coppins	(CAS Honda)	30+30=60
2	Ken De Dycker	(CAS Honda)	27+27=54
3	Gordon Crockard	(Wulfsport Honda)	25+25=50
4	Mark Jones	(PAR Honda)	23+23=46
5	James Noble	(RWJ Honda)	21+21=42
6	Danny Smyth	(Wiseco Honda)	17+17=34
7	Neville Bradshaw	(Motovision Suzuki)	19+13=32
8	Mark Eastwood	(Wiseco Honda)	15+15=30
9	Mark Hucklebridge	(MotoXtreme Kawasaki)	13+11=24
10	Jody Smyth	(Wiseco Honda)	11+10=21

MX2

1	Carl Nunn	(EA KTM)	30+27=57
2	Billy MacKenzie	(Bike-It Dixon Yamaha)	25+30=55
3	Tommy Searle	(Molson Kawasaki)	27+25=52
4	Tom Church	(Molson Kawasaki)	19+23=42
5	Shaun Simpson	(Wulfsport Honda)	21+21=42
6	Gareth Swanepoel	(Molson Kawasaki)	23+17=40
7	Brad Anderson	(Pioneer Yamaha)	17+19=36
8	Jussi Vehvilainen	(Motovision Suzuki)	11+15=26
9	Elliot Banks-Browne	(RWJ Honda)	7+13=20
10	Kristian Whatley	(Honda)	8+9=17

Series standings

MX1

1 De Dycker 391 points, 2 Noble 334, 3 Crockard 279, 4 Jones 265, 5 Coppins 237, 6 Bradshaw 213, 7 Sword 158, 8 D Smyth 147, 9 Eastwood 145, 10 Hucklebridge 133

MX2

1 Searle 367 points, 2 Nunn 363, 3 MacKenzie 341, 4 Anderson 274, 5 Swanepoel 260, 6 Smith 221, 7 Simpson 195, 8 Dougan 162, 9 Kohut 124, 10 Probert 115



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OVERANDOUT!

YOUTH CHAMPIONS CROWNED AS BYMX,
BRITISH MASTERS AND BSMA SERIES SIGN OFF

OVERANDOUT!

BYMX, BRITISH MASTERS AND BSMA BIG-SHOTS CROWNED

It's nearly all over for the 2007 youth motocross season and the BYMX, British Masters and BSMA Finals have all had their concluding events and we now know who the champions are.

The only series still with one round to complete is the MD Racing Best of British championship (BSMA) with the final round scheduled for Pontrilas on September 16/17.

So what has the season unearthed? Well, the standard of racing has been brilliant this year with a number of riders coming into their own and proving themselves worthy as champions.

We'll start with the BSMA Finals which were held at Landrake in Devon. After months of club qualifying rounds the best 40 club riders in each class came together for what turned out to be an enjoyable event.

Rickie Roderick did the business in the Juniors and after riding well in all five races he certainly deserved his title.

Connor Walkley is one rider to keep an eye out for in future championships. Not only did he win the BSMA Finals, he also walked away with the British Youth SW85cc championship as well in only his first season in the group after his switch from the 65cc class. Way to go Connor!

In the BW85s at Landrake, Lewis Abbott produced a fine performance to take victory. Lewis has been hit and miss this season so it was nice to see his true ability shine in Devon.

A name not that familiar with some of you I

would imagine is Arun Agius. Arun took the Senior title at Landrake and as always gave 100 per cent and deserved to walk away with his very first championship win.

Next we come to the British Masters champions. The season has seen depleted line-ups which is a shame but the racing has still been fantastic – so well done everyone. Right from the off in the dreadful conditions of Matchams Park I had a funny feeling that Adam Sterry would take the 2006 65cc title and he did just that.

It took five hard-fought rounds for Pioneer Yamaha's Jack Rowe to finally take the SW85 title. Jack's group in my opinion is the strongest class we have and he showed real grit at the final round at Pontrilas in the sticky conditions to take the title.

Yet another Pioneer Yamaha rider added to Embo's bulging trophy cabinet and that was Daniel Arnold in the BW85s. Daniel blitzed the opposition in both the BYMX and British Masters events and now takes on the bigger boys in 2007 on a 125 machine – well done that man.

PAR Homes Honda future star Steven Clarke took the Youth 125 title in commanding style. Steven looked a lot more relaxed in the British Masters series than in others he contested and in doing so won by a considerable margin.

After a season of small and niggling problems the British Youth championship finally ended at Talsarn in West Wales. Again the weather turned against everyone but the riders did their best and the British champions were crowned.

Jack Kelly has been in devastating form throughout the season and finally lifted the 65cc title with a huge grin at Talsarn. Jack is one of the most exciting young riders out there so watch out for the Kellymeister when he finally moves up a class to the SW85s in 2007.

As I mentioned before, Team Green's Connor Walkley won the small-wheeled class in fine style in his very first season in the class. Will we see the young Welsh flyer move up to the BW85s in 2007?

Pioneer Yamaha must be so pleased with their first season involved in youth motocross – Embo's fantastic looking team have walked away with so many titles this season so well done to them. And just to underline their dominance in the youth arena Luke Remmer won the Youth Intermediate class as well. It came down to how well he rode at Talsarn and he did the business and I would imagine put a big cheesy grin on the boss's face.

Last but not least we crowned the Premier class champion. With a season of fights in the pits, disagreements off the track and all sorts of behind-the-scenes controversy, one rider rose above it all to lift the title – Ashley Greedy.

Ashley moves up to the adult ranks in 2007 and after years of racing for Team Green he'll be riding for the PAR Homes Honda squad. If things go to plan he could be the next big thing in the UK within the next two to three years.

So another season finished and it's been a real eye-opener this year with some good memories and some bad ones but what plants itself in my mind is all the riders have produced brilliant racing and that's the main thing.

**Daniel Arnold is crowned
the British Masters
BW85 champ**





BSMA Finals Senior champ Arun Agius – he also gets our vote for best sponsor



Jack Kelly (#43) clinches the BYMX 65cc title in Talsarn



Lewis Abbot finally hits top form in Devon



Luke Remmer sews up the BYMX Youth Intermediate title



Connor Walkley takes two of the major SW85 crowns up for grabs

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Rocks! Red Bull X-Fighters day at Cusses Gorse



Really rocks! Ben Watson spanking the Yanks

WRWS!

MORE MONTHLY HIGHS AND LOWS...

What Rocks, What Sucks this month may upset a few people but it will also put a smile on a few faces as well.

I attended the BSMA championship round at Landrake and was quietly impressed by a certain gentleman who was the clerk of the course for the day. Not only did he know what he was doing he did it in a way that was calm, relaxed and very professional. I'm not going to mention the chap's name but you rock mister.

What I don't understand is why some riders

spend all day giving 100 per cent to try to achieve a good overall finish and hopefully come away with a nice trophy and then don't turn up for the awards ceremony? After all, you've put the work in and deserve it and the organisers have also made an effort to supply in some cases some really nice silverware. Not turning up sucks.

What rocks is when you go to the USA and kick some American butt and that was the case for Ben Watson who qualified for Loretta Lynn's Amateur National Championship – the biggest motocross event in the world – and came away

in third overall in the Auto class. Ben you rock and win this month's Rider of the Month.

What rocks was the Red Bull X-Fighters day at Cusses Gorse. The track was perfect, Red Bull supplied a DJ and some great food for the lucky finalists and Tommy Searle gave lessons on how to goon.

The top six will get to hang out in Madrid with Travis Pastrana – what a prize! Red Bull you rock.

Just one more from me this month, the 2007 season could see a televised British youth championship. Now that really would rock!



Double 85cc champ Alessandro Lupino

MYBESTTRACE

This month's My Best Race comes from James Cottrell. James suffered a serious injury at the start of the year but after making his return he's impressed so much that he'll be riding for the PAR Homes Honda team in 2007 on a 250F. Take it away James...

"My best race was at the first of the two BYMX rounds in Ireland at Ballykelly. It was in moto two and after a real bad start I came past the pits in 18th place on lap one.

"I quickly upped my pace and by lap four I was on it and managed to get back into fifth position and I was catching the lead group who were about five seconds ahead.

"I continued to ride hard and push myself to go faster and got into a comfortable third spot. The two riders in front were about 15 seconds ahead of me – with only a few laps to go I didn't think it was possible to catch the front two until I read my lap times on the pitboard.

"I was consistently lapping two seconds faster than the leader and quickly made up ground. I got within a bike length of the lead and went for a silly pass and went down with one lap remaining.

"So I finished in second but have never felt so good on a bike and I now know I have what it takes to win one of these rounds. My dad was so happy and so was I, that race made my weekend."

You can find out more on James at www.jamescottrell.co.uk

ALOOKATLUKE!

In last month's Rage we ran a story on Luke Newman who lost the use of his right arm after a crash but is now back on a bike and doing the business following a visit to a specialist nerve doctor at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital in Stanmore.

Lack of space meant we had to drop his pic but after me and Lawless met up with the gutsy youngster at the Red Bull X-Fighters day at Cusses Gorse we decided if anyone deserves their pic in Rage it's Luke!

Well done mate – you're an inspiration...

DOUBLETOP!

It's been a great year for Italian 85cc rider Alessandro Lupino – not only did he recently take the world championship in Finland, he's also claimed the European title as well on his flying KTM.

The young Italian now steps up to the 125cc ranks and with the backing of the Italian federation you may see him on another world championship podium very soon.

Our own Max Anstie was also taking part in the championship and came away with a creditable 10th place finish.





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TARMACTASTIC!

Gino Rea, the talented motocrosser who's switched to supermoto, is showing the Euro riders what it's all about.

Gino contests the Red Bull Junior Cup which runs alongside the Supermoto Euro Cup and features the best young riders in Europe racing KTM 250SX-Fs. At the last round in France Gino ripped to third overall and is currently lying eighth in the championship with three rounds to go in Germany, Belgium and France.

Also representing the UK in the championship are Chris Hodgson, Richard Blakeman, Oliver Pope and Lee Cunliffe.

As well as a race-ready 250SX-F in supermoto trim delivered to the track, KTM's comprehensive package for the European races includes all safety equipment, nomination fees,

accommodation and food, OMV racing fuel and Dunlop tyres.

The price of the Junior Cup package is 1500 Euros which is refunded in 250 Euro instalments over the six races in the programme and all riders also have access to mentor Klaus Kinigadner for added support and consultation.

The 2006 series also offers a very attractive prize – a new KTM 450 SMR will be made available free of charge to the winner to enable him to compete in supermoto national championships.

Contact any official KTM dealer – they're all there at www.ktm.com – to be considered for the Red Bull KTM Supermoto Junior Euro Cup. If I were some of you guys I would be watching the KTM website for details of the 2007 series.

JACK WILSON



AGE: 8
BIKE: BUD RACING KTM 65
YEARS RACING: 3
KIT: ALLOY
NUMBER OF TROPHIES: 62
TITLES: 2
BROKEN BONES: 1
TRUCK/VAN: MERCEDES SPRINTER

AARON MORGAN



AGE: 16
BIKE: YZ125
YEARS RACING: 9
KIT: THOR
NUMBER OF TROPHIES: 72
TITLES: 0
BROKEN BONES: 2
TRUCK/VAN: MERCEDES 814

LEWIS KERR



AGE: 16
BIKE: HONDA BW85
YEARS RACING: 4
KIT: ACERBIS AND ALPINESTARS
NUMBER OF TROPHIES: 100
TITLES: 1
BROKEN BONES: 3
TRUCK/VAN: SPRINTER AND CARAVAN

WARREN ABRAHAMS



AGE: 14
BIKE: KAWASAKI BW85
YEARS RACING: 4
KIT: ALPINESTARS
NUMBER OF TROPHIES: 35
TITLES: 0
BROKEN BONES: 1
TRUCK/VAN: SPORTS CRUISER

HARD TIMES!

A RUN OF BAD RESULTS LEAVES BILLY MORE DETERMINED THAN EVER TO TURN IT ALL AROUND



MAN, THINGS have not been going well recently. I dunno what the hell is up but I've been trying everything to get the ball rolling again. It's really hard when you are in this job and things go bad – you see it every year with different riders, I just never thought I would have the problem!

My routine started to fade into a distant view – like I was going through the motions but I wasn't feeling any improvement – and this is when my results started dropping off. So since then I've been trying to regain focus again by trying some different things like more riding, interval sessions, more road trips to the races instead of boring flights.

I felt with the selection of tracks coming up that I would find the groove again because when I'm out practising during the week I feel great and I ride well. However, in the races I haven't been able to break away with the front guys at the start so I then get caught up in the race for sixth to 10th and when that happens I just start thinking this isn't where I should be – I should be at the front!

Slowly I start dropping to the back, the pit signals start to look blurry because I'm thinking too much about why this is happening, the track gets rougher in my mind and it all falls apart!

So there ya go, the truth behind riders' problems – sometimes it isn't the bike... I do have to say that I have found this year's 250 more difficult to get to grips with. Without doubt it is better than the '05 version but with everyone back in the mix in MX2, the team and I have been trying to find that 'extra bit' of performance.

I can ride my practice bike day-in and day-out with the same set-up but for some reason, on race weekends, we have to spend time trying to find the best configuration to be competitive and sometimes we lose our way. No-one's fault, it's just with the new frame being so much better it's easier to notice the way it handles. Sometimes it is absolutely awesome and sometimes I can get it wrong. Last year's bike was more flexible so it wasn't as easy to notice when it was handling out of character, it was always just 'fine'.

Fine was good enough for '05 because Yamaha ruled the roost but aluminum frames are obviously the way forward and I know now the testing and set-ups from each track this year will give everyone the best information for next year – so don't be surprised to see Cairoli claim his title back in '07! However, being a Kawasaki man again, Pourcel might keep it so I'll leave it up for you guys to decide!

So can we ignore every race this month please? I've given you a few excuses already and I hope now I get my finger out at Hawkstone!

The Nations is almost here which means 450 time! I was on it today at Tonymoto, setting things up for Matterley and getting the feel for the power. I've started preparing earlier this year because I want the Nations to be something for the Brits to remember! I felt comfortable with the power and possibly wanted more so I'll be back riding the 450 next week with some more settings!

Man this column is boring...sorry guys, I'll tell you some fun stories! At Lierop last week for the GP there was a robber on the loose! Some French guy was sneaking round the riders' camp in Holland. I first noticed I had three pairs of boots missing and a helmet! I was p****d off but not nearly as upset as some of the other riders who had all their push bikes nicked!

I was parked next to Gundersen when all of a sudden I heard him shout and run out of the camper

with only a towel on! The thief had nicked his helmet but dropped it after Kenneth had caught him and made a dash for it! So me and Kenneth set off on a hunt for the rogue. Mark Eastwood was in also tow as he was helping me for the weekend.

We scoured the whole camping area looking for a guy fitting the description Kenneth had given – a tall kid with dark hair and a grey hoody. We didn't find him but unbeknown to us, Easty had seen a kid looking very suspicious. Along came 'Officer' Ashley Kane (from Fox Europe) and together 'Mark and Kane' followed 'the lead' for a good 10 minutes. In that time the kid had changed jumper and made a lap of the paddock for no real reason. We had him! So when the guy was stupid enough to come back to the rider's Living Area for more, Easty asked Kenneth if that was the guy and the chase was on!

The kid ran like the wind, only to have me and Kenneth straight after him. He panicked as he got himself cornered from about five sides and I grabbed him by the shirt! Things could have got a lot more nasty if Kenneth had 100 per cent identified him but he was 'only 80 per cent sure'. I was gutted, I had this guy by the neck and wanted to give him what for!

But with the delay the police had arrived and started making a royal mess of it all. The efficiency of the Dutch police! The suspect had no ID, matched the description and had the keys to a Vito van full of stolen bikes! Easty found the van too – the boy is a legend!

So we had to leave it to the police who eventually gave back the stolen goods to everyone. Three pairs of boots and a helmet for me, a minibike for James Noble, full carbon racer bike for Gundersen, a



mountain bike for Tom Church, the list goes on – his van was loaded! Mark Jones reckoned they should have smashed his hands to pulp, then he wouldn't steal again! I'm with you Mark!

Well I had more to tell you guys but DBR are tight and only give me one page! Hint hint...

I rode the sand at Dunkerque before Lierop which was awesome. I am thinking about living in Belgium next year but I'll still be doing the British championship.

I want to give thanks to Yamaha and 'Bike-it' for sticking behind me through this rough patch, although I will make sure I give you guys a bigger send off than this, trust me, you guys are the best *sniff, sniff!

Looking forward to the rest of the season and next year. Three big races left and I want to put these 'fricking gremlins' to bed so I'm on a high for the winter. Looking forward to all the shows, supercrosses, Moto-1 and enduros through the winter. Hope I see you all there!

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